A Summarised Quranic Commentary: The Path of Peace of Mind

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah

PodQuran - Vol 2



Adopting Positive Characteristics Leads to Peace of Mind

A Summarised Quranic Commentary: The Path of Peace of Mind – Chapter 2 Al Baqarah

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Compiler's Notes

We have tried diligently to do justice in this volume however if there are any short falls found then the compiler is personally and solely responsible for them.

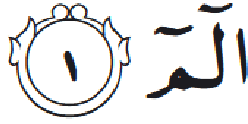
We accept the possibility of faults and shortcomings in an effort to complete such a difficult task. We might have unconsciously stumbled and committed errors for which we ask for indulgence and forgiveness of our readers and the drawing of our attention thereto will be appreciated. We earnestly invite constructive suggestions which can be made to ShaykhPod.Books@gmail.com.

Introduction

The following is a fully-referenced and easy to understand summarised commentary (Tafseer) on Chapter 2 Al Baqarah of the Holy Quran. It specifically highlights and discusses the good characteristics one must adopt and the bad characteristics they must avoid in order to achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds.

Adopting Positive Characteristics Leads to Peace of Mind.

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verse 1



“Alif, Lām, Meem.”

The exact meaning of this verse is unknown. But this verse could be indicating the fact that the Holy Quran is comprised of Arabic letters and words which the Arabs, who were the first to hear it, were very familiar with. This means that they had no excuses but to accept the truthfulness of the Holy Quran, as they fully understood its miraculous words, words which they could not match in meaning, elegance and practical application, even though they were masters of the Arabic language and referred to themselves as the most elegant of speakers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 23:

“And if you are in some doubt, concerning what We sent down upon Our special devotee, then bring one chapter like it, and call upon all your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.”

Even if someone produces an elegant and rhythmic Arabic sentence they could never match its deep insights, which penetrate the very essence of human nature, psyche and attitude. They could not match its ability to be easily understood, even by uneducated people and practically applied in one’s life. As it addresses the very nature of humans, it is timeless advice which benefits every person, place and generation. Not a single verse of the Holy Quran can or will be matched in this respect. Another proof of its divine origins.

The expressions in the Holy Quran are unmatched while its teachings are explained in a simple way. The Holy Quran mentions the previous nations in detail, even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in these matters. The Holy Quran commands every good and forbids every of evil so that security and peace can spread

in every household and society. The Holy Quran does not exaggerate or lie unlike most poems and stories. All the short and long verses in the Holy Quran are beneficial to every person, irrespective of their gender, age, social status or anything else. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran different lessons are highlighted. Unlike all other books, the Holy Quran does not bore the seeker of truth. The Holy Quran supports its warnings and promises with undeniable proof and evidence. When the Holy Quran discusses something which can be considered abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides an easy way to practically implement it. It encourages one to fulfil the purpose of their creation, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, in a straight forward yet profound way. It makes the right path clear and appealing to anyone who desires real success in both worlds. The knowledge of the Holy Quran is timeless, as it targets human nature, which is timeless, and can therefore be applied to every age, society and generation. It is a cure for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied under the guidance of the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is the solution for every problem an individual or a society can ever face. One only needs to observe history to clearly see that the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran succeeded in spreading justice and peace. Centuries have passed yet the Holy Quran has maintained its purity as Allah, the Exalted, promised to safeguard it. No other book possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian."

The Holy Quran is the greatest and timeless miracle of Allah, the Exalted, which He granted to His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But only the one who seeks the truth, even if it contradicts their desires, will benefit from it. The seeker of their desires will merely cherry pick from it and as a result they will not obtain right guidance in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

"And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 1:

"Alif, Lām, Meem."

The main component of knowledge is letters. Therefore, this verse could also be indicating the importance on knowledge. Gaining and acting on both worldly and religious knowledge is a duty on all in Islam, according to the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. Ignorance only leads to sins and misguidance, as sins cannot be avoided without knowledge nor can right guidance be obtained without it. One must ensure that they act on their knowledge, as knowledge by itself is not useful until it is acted upon. Just like a map to a destination is not useful until one practically uses the map to reach the destination, similarly, knowledge without practice does not lead to success. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

"…and then did not take it on (did not act upon knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]…"

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 2-5

ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢﴾

ٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱلْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَٰهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾

وَٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِٱلْءَاخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾

“This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah.

Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer and spend out of what We have provided for them.

And who believe in what has been revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith].

Those are upon [right] guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful.”

The Book, the Holy Quran, is the response of the supplication made in the previous chapter for right guidance. Chapter 1 Al Fatihah, verses 6-7:

“Guide us to the straight path. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have earned [Your] anger or of those who are astray.”

Therefore, muslims are left with no excuses except to respond to the Holy Quran by fulfilling its rights. This involves reciting it regularly and correctly in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and acting upon it according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, without cherry picking the verses which suits one’s desires. This is the attitude of those who are conscious of Allah, the Exalted.

There is no doubt in regards to the origin of the Holy Quran, as it is unchallengeable and unmatchable in elegance, practical application, right guidance and covering every aspect of human nature. As human nature is timeless, the teachings of the Holy Quran are also timeless. There is no doubt that the Holy Quran guides one to success in both worlds, as it is from Allah, the Exalted, the One who knows what is best for those He created.

The guidance mentioned in the main verse has been left open. This indicates that the Holy Quran will guide every person, irrespective of the situation they are facing, to what is best for them at that time, something which varies from

person to person and situation to situation. This is another sign indicating the miraculous nature of the Holy Quran. This also dispels the misconception that the Holy Quran only guides one to Paradise. It actually guides people to peace of mind and body in both worlds, irrespective of the situation they face, the time they live in or any other external factor. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But this right guidance in both worlds is only available to those who fear Allah, the Exalted, as they alone will sincerely strive to understand and act on the Holy Quran irrespective of their desires or the desires of others.

Those who fear Allah, the Exalted, will sincerely obey Him and avoid His disobedience. If they happen to fall into sin, they will sincerely repent. This involves feeling remorse, seeking forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and the people involved, as long as this does not lead to further trouble, promising not to return to the same or similar sin again and to make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people, as long as the latter does not lead to further problems. In addition, it is important to note that an aspect of adopting the fear of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, piety, is to avoid lawful things out of fear it may take one to what is unlawful. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451. This means one should not indulge in lawful worldly things as it contradicts piety. Indulging in worldly things leads to vain things, which will be a great

regret for a person on Judgement Day, especially when they observe the reward given to those who used their resources in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Also, vain things often lead to sinful things. For example, vain talk often leads to lying, backbiting and slandering others.

Even though the Holy Quran was revealed for all of mankind, yet it will only rightly guide those who fear Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability on Judgement Day. Allah, the Exalted, and Judgement Day are part of the unseen. The unseen are the things which cannot be perceived by the five senses. Having belief in unseen things is an essential part of faith as believing in something which is apparent has little real value. This is why the belief of the one who experiences Judgement Day and witnesses the unseen elements, such as Hell and Paradise, will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Those who fear Allah, the Exalted, will hasten to obey Allah, the Exalted, and prepare adequately for their final judgement. This is only achieved when one learns and acts on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whereas, those who do not fear Allah, the Exalted, nor fear the consequences of their actions, have no need to prepare for Judgement Day and will therefore ignore the Holy Quran. This attitude is enough to distinguish between those who truly believe in Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability and those who do not. In addition, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, will not cherry pick from the Holy Quran to suit their own desires, nor will they intentionally misinterpret its teachings to justify their misguided ways. They will instead strive to implement all the teachings of the Holy Quran irrespective of their desires and the desires of others. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

"And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 2-3:

“This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.”

It is important to note that it is unwise to claim that one will not believe in something until they perceive it with their five senses and understand it as there are many things in this world which are unseen yet people believe in them and make use of them. For example, very few people understand the mode of action of the medicines their take yet they make use of them. Even those who fail to see any obvious improvement in their health do not stop taking medicine as they are convinced it does help them, even if this help is unseen to them.

It is actually a great mercy from Allah, the Exalted, that He expects people to believe in the unseen and does not expect them to understand the unseen things, as they are often beyond the comprehension of people in this world. One only needs to firmly believe in them to be counted as a believer. But it is important to note that even though unseen things cannot be perceived through the five senses, Allah, the Exalted, has placed signs and evidence within the universe indicating their existence and reality. For example, when one observes how a dead seed sprouts to life after it is buried within the ground through rain, similarly, the dead seed named human will be brought

back to life. If one observes the perfectly balanced systems within the universe, such as the distance of the Earth from the Sun, the water cycle, the perfect density of the seas and oceans, which allows for ships to sail on them while maintaining life within them, the density of the Earth and other balanced systems, they will deduce that the imbalanced actions of people, where people are not fully compensated according to their actions in this world, will also be balanced someday: Judgement Day. If one observes the perfect synchronisation of the day and night, the seasons and other systems within the universe, they will understand that it cannot all be random. If there were multiple Gods than it would lead to chaos within the Heavens and the Earth, as each God would want different things. The countless perfect balanced systems within the universe indicate a Single Creator: Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

"Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 2-3:

"This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them."

Those who fear Allah, the Exalted, will act on the teachings of Islam, which ensures they establish their obligatory prayers, which involves fulfilling them with their full conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. It is sufficient to understand the importance of the five daily obligatory prayers by the fact that Allah, the Exalted, has used faith and the prayer interchangeably in the Holy Quran, thereby indicating that there is no faith without the prayer. For example, the following verse was revealed indicating that the prayers of those who faced the first prayer direction was not in vain. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 40. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"And thus We have made you a median [just] community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you. And We did not make the prayer direction which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allāh has guided. And never would Allāh have caused you to lose your faith [your previous prayers]…"

In other places, Allah, the Exalted, has tied disbelief with not praying. Chapter 75 Al Qiyamah, verse 31:

"And he had not believed, nor had he prayed."

Finally, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has also warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 2-3:

“This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.”

Therefore, those who fear Allah, the Exalted, will therefore establish their obligatory prayers and they will use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One must understand that the worldly blessings they have been granted are a loan, not a gift. A gift would indicate they are free to use them however they please, whereas a loan indicates one must use them in ways stipulated by the Owner: Allah, the Exalted. This behaviour is the practical proof of their verbal declaration of faith and certainty in Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran, the other divine books, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 4:

"*And who believe in what has been revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith].*"

One must strive to adopt certainty of faith so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, thereby ensuring they obtain peace of mind and body in both worlds. As indicated by verse 4, certainty of faith is achieved by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

It is important to note that verse 4 mentions certainty in the hereafter instead of only belief. A person can believe in the hereafter without practically preparing for it, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whereas, the one who is certain of the hereafter will practically prepare for it. In addition, certainty in the hereafter means one believes in the Day of Judgement according to its reality. Whereas, one can believe in the Day of Judgement while possessing a twisted and corrupt belief in respect to how people will be judged and the severity of the Day of Judgement. For example, many muslims believe that as they belong to the nation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they are the beloveds and chosen ones of Allah, the Exalted, and will therefore be pardoned easily without facing the consequences of their persistent disobedience to Allah, the Exalted. This was the same twisted belief which the previous nations possess and it has been criticized in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 18:

“But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of Allāh and His beloved." Say, "Then why does He punish you for your sins?" Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created…”

Other muslims belittle the seriousness of Hell and believe its punishment is not so severe. They compare it to a worldly prison thereby fooling themselves into persisting on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Other muslims incorrectly believe that as they are muslims today, they are guaranteed to leave this world with their faith and therefore claim that even if they go to Hell, it will only be for a limited time. A similar claim has been made by the previous nations. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 80:

“And they say, "Never will the Fire touch us, except for [a few] numbered days." Say, "Have you taken a covenant with Allāh? For Allāh will never break His covenant. Or do you say about Allāh that which you do not know?"”

They fail to understand that no one is guaranteed to leave this world with their faith and the more one’s persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, the greater chance they will leave this world without their faith. In addition, even a moment of Hell is unbearable so how can one be satisfied with staying there for longer than that, even if they are eventually released? Allah, the Exalted, has described Hell and its severity vividly in the Holy Quran in order to eliminate this false belief.

Other muslims false believe they can persist on sins and someone else will intercede on their behalf and save them, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though his intercession is a fact, yet some muslims will still go to Hell. This has been confirmed in the Hadiths which discuss his intercession on Judgement Day, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308.

There are many more twisted and corrupt beliefs which are prevalent amongst muslims in respect to the hereafter, which one must avoid. This has been indicated by verse 4.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah verses 2-4:

"This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer and spend out of what We have provided for them. And who believe in what has been revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith]."

This is the summary of Islam and how it must influence every aspect of one's life and how they interact and use every blessing they have been granted. The one who actualizes Islam in this manner will be rightly guided through

every situation they face. In times of ease, they will maintain gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. This in turn leads to more blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…'”

In times of difficulties, they will avoid complaining through their speech and actions and maintain their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by accepting that He chooses what is best for everyone involved, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

This will in turn, lead to an uncountable reward in both worlds. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“…Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

It is important to note that the one who actualizes Islam is worthy of hoping in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. But the one who fails to behave in this manner and expects Allah, the Exalted, to grant them success in both worlds is nothing but a wishful thinker and this attitude has no value in Islam. This difference between the two attitudes has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. One must never forget that even the past nations claim to love their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, but as they failed to practically follow in their footsteps they will not unite with them in the next world. Love must be supported by actions, otherwise it has no value.

The one who actualizes their faith is rightly guided and they will obtain peace of body and mind in both worlds. This is the ultimate success. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 5:

“Those are upon [right] guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful.”

As indicated by this verse, one must remember that behaving correctly is rooted in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as the inspiration, knowledge, ability and opportunity to behave correctly and obey Allah, the Exalted, comes from His mercy. Remembering this will prevent one from adopting pride, thereby destroying their reward and right guidance in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah verses 2-5:

“This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer and spend out of what We have provided for them. And who believe in what has been revealed to you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith]. Those are upon [right] guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful.”

These verses make it crystal clear that right guidance and success in both worlds is only obtained by practically following the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One must therefore ensure they adhere to these two sources of guidance and refrain from anything which does not run in line with them. Anything which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606. One should avoid acting on other good things until they first

implement these two sources of guidance. The more one acts on other things, the less they will act on these two sources of guidance. This leads to misguidance.

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 6-7

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ٦

خَتَمَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ ۖ وَعَلَىٰٓ أَبْصَٰرِهِمْ غِشَٰوَةٌ ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ٧

"Indeed, those who disbelieve - it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them - they will not believe.

Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil. And for them is a great punishment."

The first thing to note is that a muslim must ensure they adopt complete faith. This involves internal belief supported by physical actions in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Believing internally while disbelieving through one's physical actions, by failing to obey Allah, the Exalted, does not lead to success. Faith is a like a plant which must be nourished with physical actions. Just like a plant dies when it fails to receive nourishment, so can the faith of a person who fails to nourish their internal belief with physical acts of obedience. Persisting on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, causes one to lose the ability to use their senses correctly, as a result they will continue in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This may cause their faith to gradually die until nothing remains at the time of their death. This is the manifest loss.

The main verses refer to those who have already made their minds up beforehand. They have already decided to remain steadfast on obeying their own desires and the desires of people and are not interested in clear proofs and evidence nor do they desire to follow the truth, as it will contradict their desires. In both worldly and religious matters one must adopt an open mind whereby they accept the truth when it is presented to them with clear evidence. One must understand that persisting on their desires and rejecting the truth: their purpose, which is to obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, will only take them further away from peace of mind and body in both worlds, even if they manage to obtain and hold onto their worldly desires, such as wealth and leadership. These things will only become a source of stress and anxiety for them in both worlds. As Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who achieves it. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

A major cause of rejecting the truth is blind imitation, something the non-muslims of Mecca were drowned in. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 170:

“And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allāh has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing." Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?”

A person must avoid behaving like cattle and instead use the common sense and intelligence they were granted in order to deduce the truth for themself. Blind imitation has even been criticized by Islam, as Allah, the Exalted, desires people to accept Islam based on clear evidence and understanding, not blind imitation of one’s family. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me…””

Finally, the truth is that every worshipper of false deities only worships their own desires. The worshipper is fully aware that their false deity will not give them a code of conduct to live by. They will therefore derive this code of conduct according to their own desires. This allows them to live according to their own desires, like an animal, while cloaking themself with a religious garment. This applies to all religions which are either man-made or have been changed by people. As Islam has been preserved by Allah, the Exalted, it is the only code of conduct which is derived from Him and following it therefore raises a person beyond the level of animals.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 6:

"Indeed, those who disbelieve - it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them - they will not believe."

One must continue advising others to do what is good and warning them against what is bad, even if they fail to pay heed to them. These verses do not give a muslim permission to abandon advising and warning others. Only Allah, the Exalted, knows whether a person will eventually heed the advice and warnings given to them or not. Therefore, one should continue to fulfil their duty to advise and warn others, according to the teachings of Islam, especially those under their care. They should avoid their company but remain firm on advising good and warning against bad. In addition, they

should continue aiding them in good things, as this may encourage them to sincerely repent from their evil ways.

Furthermore, a person should not act as a guardian over people thereby believing they can force them to accept right guidance. The duty of a muslim is to kindly advise others through their speech and actions, by leading by example, but their duty is not to force people on to the straight path. Adopting this attitude contradicts Islamic teachings and can lead to a person becoming bitter and angry towards others who fail to listen to their good advice. This bitterness can even prevent one from fulfilling the rights of others. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

"So remind [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 6-7:

"…it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them - they will not believe. Allāh has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil…"

As indicated by these verses, persisting on the stubborn mentality of rejecting the truth, as it contradicts one's desires, leads to one losing the ability to discriminate the truth from falsehood, harm from benefit and good from bad. As a result, they will wander blindly in this world, not appreciating nor fulfilling the purpose of their life, which is to obey Allah, the Exalted. They will instead persist on His disobedience by misusing the blessings they were granted. This will lead to difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 7:

"…And for them is a great punishment."

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Allah, the Exalted, does not force guidance on people, as this would defy the purpose of this world, the world of tests and trials. Instead, He gives people the ability to discern the truth and presents it to them. If they adopt and act

on the truth which is to fulfil their purpose, to obey Allah, the Exalted, then that is better for them in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But the one who rejects their purpose, as it contradicts their desires, will be allowed to continue on the path they have chosen. They will experience misery in this world, as Allah, the Exalted, controls their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, and they will experience difficulties in the hereafter. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 115:

"If anyone opposes the Messenger, after guidance has been made clear to him, and follows a path other than that of the believers, We shall leave him on his chosen path- We shall burn him in Hell, an evil destination.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 6-7:

"…it is all the same for them whether you warn them or do not warn them - they will not believe. Allāh has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing, and over their vision is a veil…"

One must avoid this outcome by taking heed and acting upon the warnings and advice given in Islamic teachings. This will ensure they purify their spiritual heart by adopting the good characteristics taught by Islam, such as patience, and remove their negative characteristics, such as greed. The purification of the spiritual heart then leads to one using the rest of their senses, such as their hearing and vision, in the correct way, which leads to further blessings in both worlds. On the other hand, ignoring the warnings and advice given in Islamic teachings, even if one believes in Islam, only leads to a corrupt spiritual heart, which in turn leads to corrupt actions through the rest of their body and senses. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52. This person will not be safe from anxiety, stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

"The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 8-10

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَبِٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرِ وَمَا هُم بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾

يُخَٰدِعُونَ ٱللَّهَ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلَّآ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

فِى قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مَرَضًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌۢ بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

“And of the people are some who say, "We believe in Allah and the Last Day," but they are not believers.

They [think to] deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves and perceive [it] not.

In their hearts is disease, so Allah has increased their disease; and for them is a painful punishment because they [habitually] used to lie.”

These verses refer to the hypocrites living in Medina who pretended to be muslims for worldly reasons, such as gaining wealth and protection. Muslims must pay heed to their characteristics and avoid them in order to ensure they do not behave like them, as the one who behaves like a group of people, belongs to them. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031.

The importance of adopting good companionship is noted in the first verse where a single person speaks on behalf of a group. This indicates that one adopts the characteristics and attitude of their companions whether negative or positive, subtle or apparent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534. Therefore, one must adopt the company of good people who strive to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. The disease of the spiritual heart, which takes the form of negative characteristics, such as greed and envy, are in reality infectious and can easily transfer from person to person. If one accompanies the one with a diseased spiritual heart, it is only a matter of time before their spiritual heart also becomes diseased. This leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore difficulties in both worlds.

One must avoid adopting their attitude whereby their claim belief in Islam through their tongues but fail to show it in their actions. This would involve using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who fails to support their verbal declaration of faith with actions will have no supporting evidence to show on Judgement Day and as a result, they may well share the fate of the hypocrites. Real belief involves internal belief supported by external actions.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 8-9:

“And of the people are some who say, "We believe in Allāh and the Last Day," but they are not believers. They [think to] deceive Allāh and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves and perceive [it] not.”

The hypocrites during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, attempted to deceive the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, but in reality they only deceived themselves, as their attitude only caused harm to themselves. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

“…but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”

One should note that even though the hypocrites desired to deceive the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet Allah, the Exalted, labelled their attitude as an attempt to deceive Him. This indicates the importance of remaining sincerely obedient to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is the same as sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah…”

This indicates the importance of understanding and acting on Islamic knowledge, such as the Holy Quran, in light of the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he is the practical Islamic role model which must be followed in all aspects of one’s life. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...""

In addition, one must avoid behaving in a deceitful manner in any situation, as any worldly thing they gain from this behaviour will only become a source of stress and anxiety for them in both worlds, even if they fail to perceive this outcome. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 55:

“So let not their wealth or their children impress you. Allāh only intends to punish them through them in worldly life…”

The first sign of hypocrisy mentioned in the main verses is lying. Lying is a foul characteristic which must be avoided at all times. The one who lies to make people laugh, so their aim is not to deceive them, has been cursed three times in a single Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2315. From this Hadith alone, one can understand the dangers of lying. One must remember that lying and acting on lies, leads to sins, this in turn leads to the fire of Hell. The one who persists on lying and acting on them will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971. It does not take a genius to figure out what will happen to this person in this world and the next. Even though it has become fashionable to belittle lying, a muslim must adhere to the teachings of Islam and avoid this attitude as it only leads to trouble in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 8-9:

“And of the people are some who say, "We believe in Allāh and the Last Day," but they are not believers. They [think to] deceive Allāh and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves and perceive [it] not.”

In addition, a muslim must avoid behaving like a hypocrite by verbally declaring their belief in Islam while failing to practically actualize it while believing they will gain reward and blessings in both worlds. The one who behaves in this manner is only deceiving themself. This attitude is not hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, it is only wishful thinking, which has no value in Islam. Hope in Allah, the Exalted, is always tied to His practical

obedience, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Wishful thinking, on the other hand, is always tied with failing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and still believing they will be granted mercy and blessings in both worlds. The difference between the two has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. The one who adopts wishful thinking will fail to perceive that their attitude only takes them closer to leaving this world without their faith, as they failed to nourish their plant of faith with good deeds. As a result, the negative characteristics in their spiritual heart, which behaves like cancer, will only increase, thereby causing them to persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, even more. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 10:

“In their hearts is disease, so Allāh has increased their disease…”

The more their persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be punished in both worlds. They will continue to swear that they are devote believers who sincerely love Allah, the Exalted, but due to their insincere intention and lying attitude, they will not even understand how and why the worldly blessings they have obtained have become a source of misery for them. But what lies beyond this world for this person is even more disastrous. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 10:

“…and for them is a painful punishment because they [habitually] used to lie.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

One must therefore avoid this behaviour and outcome by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one adopts good characteristics and removes the negative ones which in turn leads to a purified spiritual heart and sincere outward actions. This person will achieve success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 11-12

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾

أَلَآ إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَـٰكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

“And when it is said to them [hypocrites], "Do not cause corruption on the earth," they say, "We are but reformers."

Unquestionably, it is they who are the corrupters, but they perceive [it] not.”

Verse 11 indicates the importance of objecting to evil. Each muslim must object to evil according to knowledge and the correct manners. If one fears further harm being caused by objecting to the evil of others then they should at least hate the evil thing in their heart. Otherwise, they must object to evil verbally or physically according to their strength. These levels have been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4340. It is important to note that objecting to evil physically does not mean one should fight, as this will further the corruption in the society. Instead, they must take practical steps to minimize and eliminate the corruption through peaceful ways. A muslim must never believe that it is acceptable to ignore the evil of others as long as they themself sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. A rotten apple will infect others until the whole society is engulfed in evil. One should advise others to do good and warn them against evil and remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only then will one be safe from the negative effects of the evil actions of others. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 164:

"And when a community among them said, "Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allāh is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?" they [the advisors] said, "To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him.""

Another aspect of hypocrisy is mentioned in these verses namely, spreading corruption. When one adopts a hypocritical attitude whereby their internal being is opposed to their external actions it will always lead to problems for them and others. For example, the two-faced person adapts their speech and actions in order to please different people. As a result of their hypocritical

attitude, they will only cause problems for themself and others, as the majority of the things they say and do are based on lies and deception.

A hypocrite may wrongfully believe they are bringing people together and causing reconciliation by adopting a two-faced attitude but as their intention is based on worldly gain, such as wealth and honour, their behaviour leads to corruption not reformation. In addition, the hypocrite will easily compromise on the truth and what is right for the sake of worldly gain and as a result, they will wrongfully believe that by compromising on the truth they are benefiting others. But as falsehood always leads to trouble, their attitude only causes the spread of corruption within society. The hypocrites in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, desired to reconcile things between the muslims and the non-muslims of Mecca by compromising on the truth and justice while believing they were reforming things, even though their attitude would only lead to more injustice and corruption spreading within society. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 11-12:

“And when it is said to them [hypocrites], "Do not cause corruption on the earth," they say, "We are but reformers." Unquestionably, it is they who are the corrupters, but they perceive [it] not.”

In addition, from these verses one can understand that if they desire reformation within society they must adhere to the teachings of Islam, as Allah, the Exalted, alone knows what will benefit society in the short and long term and what will not. When people make choices based on their short sightedness, lack of knowledge and natural biases, they will only cause

corruption to spread within society, even if they desire to reform it. Chapter 38 Saad, verse 26:

“…so judge between the people in truth and do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allāh…”

It is also important to note that a person must combine a good intention, which is to reform relationships within society, with the correct actions. One without the other is not good enough. Sometimes, muslims who desire to reform their relationship with others will possess a good intention yet due to ignorance of Islamic knowledge and behaviour they will only cause further problems. Therefore, it is important for muslims to learn and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they couple their good intention with the correct actions and therefore cause reformation within society instead of spreading corruption.

A similar attitude which causes corruption and disunity to spread within society, especially families, is often found in those who genuinely desire to create unity within their family but due to ignorance and the negative characteristics they possess, they only cause corruption and disunity within their family. For example, many elders speak negatively about their relatives in front of their family, such as their children. As a result, their family, such as their children, harbor negative feelings about their relatives, even if they barely know them. With the passing of time, these feelings lead to fractured and broken relationships. It is strange how the very elders who cause separation between their relatives then moan about the disunity within their

family. This attitude must be avoided by only speaking about others in a positive way, which has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4860, and by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one becomes a source of unity within society, not a source disunity and corruption.

In addition, if one cannot be a source of unity amongst people, then the least they can do is avoid becoming a source of corruption and disunity within society. It is far better to take a neutral stance whereby one does not hinder nor benefit society than becoming a source of corruption and disunity for them. Behaving in this manner, whereby one keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others, is actually an act of charity one does to themself, according to a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 250.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 11-12:

“And when it is said to them [hypocrites], "Do not cause corruption on the earth," they say, "We are but reformers." Unquestionably, it is they who are the corrupters, but they perceive [it] not.”

As the hypocrites tried to hinder the spread of Islam, they were indirectly spreading corruption within society. This indicates that a society can never obtain peace and justice without implementing the teachings of Islam. This is because the fear of Allah, the Exalted, will always prevent wrongdoing

even when the law cannot prevent it. For example, it is the fear of Allah, the Exalted, that prevents a person wronging another, especially when they believe they can escape the police. Without the fear of Allah, the Exalted, a person will take the opportunity to wrong others and commit crimes as long as they believe they can escape the law. This lack of the fear of Allah, the Exalted, will always cause corruption and injustice to spread in society. Therefore, by hindering the spread of Islam, the hypocrites in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and those found in the modern era are only spreading injustice and corruption within society. Therefore, muslims must strive to implement the teachings of Islam so that they play their role of spreading justice and peace within society, even if they cannot influence society on a national level.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 12:

"Unquestionably, it is they who are the corrupters, but they perceive [it] not."

This verse warns against adopting a blind and ignorant attitude whereby one fails to observe and understand the consequences of their actions. The one who fails to learn the consequences of their actions, through Islamic knowledge and by observing the actions and consequences of others, will eventually reach a level whereby they do evil yet believe they are spreading goodness in society. This person will face the punishment of their persistent disobedience in this world but due to their ignorance they will fail to connect their disobedience to their constant stress, anxiety and mental problems. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

“…but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”

If they fail to repent, what they will encounter in the hereafter will be far worse. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verse 13

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا۟ كَمَآ ءَامَنَ ٱلنَّاسُ قَالُوٓا۟ أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَآ ءَامَنَ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ ۗ أَلَآ إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ١٣

“And when it is said to them [hypocrites], "Believe as the people have believed," they say, "Should we believe as the foolish have believed?" Unquestionably, it is they who are the foolish, but they know [it] not.”

The beginning of this verse indicates the importance of advising others on good things and by extension, warning them against bad things. One must fulfil this duty according to Islamic knowledge and manners in a kind and gentle way. This duty, and many others, is fulfilled correctly when one sincerely loves for others what they desire for themself. The one who adopts this attitude will advise others correctly.

In addition, the Holy Quran stresses the importance of people believing like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believed. Anyone who studies their lives will clearly observe people who actualized their faith, which involved using the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is clear that no other type of belief, such as verbally declaring one's belief while failing to act on it, is accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 115:

"And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers - We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell, and evil it is as a destination."

Therefore, muslims must believe and actualize their belief according to how the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did so, which in turn is how the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did so. This involves strictly adhering to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One must avoid acting on other things, even if they are considered good deeds. The truth is that the more one acts on other things, the less they will

act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is quite evident to those who observe others who are always keen to perform good deeds not taken from the two sources of guidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any action which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606.

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, are referred as the people in order to highlight that accepting and acting on faith is not a difficult task, which only a special few can fulfill. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has made Islam easy to accept and actualize, as it has been tailored for the nature of humans. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

"…Allāh intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship…"

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would emphasize the easy nature of Islam by advising others to work according to their strength and not to overburden themself. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 39. As Allah, the Exalted, has not burdened anyone with a duty they cannot bear and fulfill, working according to one's strength will ensure one fulfills their duties and obtains peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 13:

“And when it is said to them [hypocrites], "Believe as the people have believed," they say, "Should we believe as the foolish have believed?" Unquestionably, it is they who are the foolish, but they know [it] not.”

As Islam calls people towards using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it contradicts using these blessings in ways pleasing to oneself. It is important to understand that as Allah, the Exalted, controls the spiritual heart of a person, the abode of peace of mind, they will not obtain peace of mind and body irrespective of what worldly things they obtain as long as they fail to use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Those who fail to understand this truth, observe those who do understand this truth and act rightly as fools – fools who live their lives controlling their desires instead of unleashing them like wild animals. Their lack of knowledge and understanding makes them the real fools, as they live their lives as animals, whose only purpose is to fulfil their own desires, and as a result they are subjected to nothing but stress, anxiety, mental disorders and suicidal tendencies, even if they have moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

If they fail to repent and mend their ways, like those who have believed and actualized their faith, then their misery will extend to the hereafter as well. This is the greatest loser and fool. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 13:

“And when it is said to them [hypocrites], "Believe as the people have believed," they say, "Should we believe as the foolish have believed?" Unquestionably, it is they who are the foolish, but they know [it] not.”

The main verses also indicate a reality which has affected people since the dawn of time. Whenever a person chooses a path which is different to the path of those around them, they will be heavily criticized, even if the path they choose is not evil. The majority of this criticism actually comes from one’s own relatives and friends. Instead of adopting sincerity and encouraging their relatives to strive for a better path, they prefer that they join them on their path, even if that path is inferior or even evil. A muslim who desires to learn more about Islam will also experience this from their muslim relatives and friends. But they must never be deterred by this negative reaction, as it is a typical reaction, even the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, experienced. They must remain steadfast on their sincere intention and push through the criticism until they taste the sweetness of faith. This, by far, surpasses and makes up for any criticism they may encounter or people they may lose due to a change in their attitude. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 13:

“And when it is said to them [hypocrites], "Believe as the people have believed," they say, "Should we believe as the foolish have believed?" Unquestionably, it is they who are the foolish, but they know [it] not.”

This verse also warns against ignorance. The ignorant one will assume that fulfilling one’s desires leads to peace of mind and success, whereas controlling one’s desires and instead using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, will not result in peace of mind or success. A muslim must therefore strive to learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they understand the fact that Allah, the Exalted, controls the fate of people in this world and in the next. Whoever sincerely obeys Him will find peace and success in both worlds, even if their success in this world is not obvious. Whereas, those who disobey Him will find nothing but misery in both worlds. Islamic knowledge will allow one to clearly differentiate between these two outcomes, as they will learn examples from the past which demonstrate this fact and they will be granted the ability to observe more examples in their present life also. Whereas, remaining ignorant will prevent one from recognizing the correct path and instead one will be encouraged to blindly follow others like cattle. They will fail to differentiate what is genuinely good from what is bad and success from failure. As a result, they will choose the bad path which leads to failure in both worlds while assuming they have chosen the good and successful path. They will mock those who have chosen the successful path believing they are fools, while in reality they are the fools. Chapter 23 Al Mu’minun, verses 55-56:

“Do they think that what We extend to them of wealth and children. Is [because] We hasten for them good things? Rather, they do not perceive.”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 13:

"…Unquestionably, it is they who are the foolish, but they know [it] not."

In addition, true belief requires one to practically submit to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, according to the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the person who only wants to fulfil their desires will observe those who control themselves as fools. But in reality, they are the foolish ones as they have chosen a path which will ensure they suffer in both worlds. Their example is similar to the patient who is told by their doctor to adhere to a strict diet. This fool will ignore the doctor's advice as it contradicts their desires. They will therefore continue with their unhealthy diet and as a result they will suffer from countless mental and physical health problems, such as diabetes, obesity and being unconfident. Whereas, the one who accepts the doctor's advice may be forced to oppose and give up their desires yet it will lead them to a good and healthy mental and physical state.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 13:

“And when it is said to them [hypocrites], "Believe as the people have believed," they say, "Should we believe as the foolish have believed?" Unquestionably, it is they who are the foolish, but they know [it] not.”

This attitude can also affect the muslims who possess worldly knowledge. Their worldly knowledge deludes them into thinking they can apply their worldly knowledge and intellect to their life in order to achieve right guidance instead of learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. This attitude can also cause one to label those who pursue and implement Islamic knowledge as foolish. Even though worldly knowledge is praiseworthy, as long as it is used in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, none the less, it will never suffice someone in obtaining right guidance. Worldly knowledge cannot explain how one should use the blessings they have been granted correctly so that they achieve peace of mind and body in both worlds. This is only achieved through Islamic knowledge, knowledge obtained from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A muslim must therefore study and implement both Islamic and useful worldly knowledge without abandoning either.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 13:

“And when it is said to them [hypocrites], "Believe as the people have believed," they say, "Should we believe as the foolish have believed?" Unquestionably, it is they who are the foolish, but they know [it] not.”

It is vital for muslims to adopt certainty of faith, through learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they avoid adopting the attitude mentioned in the main verse under discussion. Those who fail to adopt certainty of faith will fail to observe how actualizing one's faith, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will benefit them in both worlds. Certainty of faith allows one to understand that the benefits obtained in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in this world are often not tangible, such as gaining wealth or authority. Instead, these benefits are often hard to observe, such as peace of mind and body. Only through certainty of faith will one appreciate these unapparent benefits and therefore strive to obtain them. If one neglects strengthening their faith then they will fail to observe these unapparent benefits and as a result they will not sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. They will instead observe those who strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain these unapparent benefits as foolish, even though they are the foolish ones.

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 14-16

وَإِذَا لَقُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ قَالُوٓا۟ ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا۟ إِلَىٰ شَيَـٰطِينِهِمْ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

ٱللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِى طُغْيَـٰنِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱشْتَرَوُا۟ ٱلضَّلَـٰلَةَ بِٱلْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَـٰرَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا۟ مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

“And when they meet those who believe, they [hypocrites] say, "We believe"; but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say, "Indeed, we are with you; we were only mockers."

[But] Allah mocks them and prolongs them in their transgression [while] they wander blindly.

Those are the ones who have purchased error [in exchange] for guidance, so their transaction has brought no profit, nor were they guided.”

The first verse indicates that a sign of hypocrisy is when one constantly reminds others of the good qualities they supposedly possess. The hypocrites would constantly remind the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, that they were staunch believers who were dedicated to the cause of Islam. The difference between a talker and a doer, is that the former is good at talking about the good qualities they supposedly possess, such as those who are always reminding others that they are trying their best to be a good muslim, yet they do not support their verbal declarations with actions. Whereas, the doers, talk little and act more. They do not need to remind others of the good qualities they supposedly possess and instead of talking about trying their best in fulfilling their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation, they actually fulfill them practically. The talkers are just lazy as Allah, the Exalted, does not burden a person with any task they cannot bear or fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286.

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity...."

Muslims must therefore avoid this hypocritical attitude by talking less about how hard they are trying to fulfill their duties and instead strive to practically fulfill them, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

In addition, the one who possesses this attitude is fascinated with the praise of others, as a result they are good at reminding others of the good qualities they supposedly possess and the good deeds they have done. When one persists on this attitude it leads to one doing good deeds in order to impress people instead of doing them in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in such a manner will be told on Judgement Day to gain the

reward for their good deeds from those who they did them for, which in reality will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A muslim must therefore avoid this attitude and constantly observe their intention to ensure they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A sign of this correct attitude is that they will not expect nor hope for any gratitude or praise from people. In fact, they will strive hard to keep their good deeds and qualities a secret in order to avoid showing off.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 14:

“And when they meet those who believe, they say, "We believe"; but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say, "Indeed, we are with you; we were only mockers.""

This verse warns against bad companionship, as a person will inevitably adopt the characteristics of their companions whether good or bad, subtle or apparent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534. One must prove their love for the righteous by accompanying them in this world. This will ensure they end up with them in the hereafter, as they will inevitably adopt the characteristics of righteousness which leads to Paradise. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688.

This verse also indicates another characteristic of hypocrisy namely, being two-faced. This is when one changes their attitude and speech in order to please different groups of people. This behaviour always leads to disgrace in both worlds, even if a person outwardly gains some worldly benefit from behaving in such a manner. The very people they aim to please will end up disliking them and any material benefit they obtain will only become a source of stress and anxiety for them in both worlds, even if these consequences are not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 15:

“[But] Allāh mocks them and prolongs them in their transgression [while] they wander blindly.”

Verse 15 also reminds people that the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, is not always obvious, such as being struck by lightning, nor does the punishment descend immediately. One must never let this reality fool them into believing they will not face the consequences of their behaviour otherwise they will continue disobeying Allah, the Exalted, which only increases the consequences they will face in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 16:

“Those are the ones who have purchased error [in exchange] for guidance, so their transaction has brought no profit, nor were they guided.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Verse 16 warns that those who persistently disobey Allah, the Exalted, will fail to differentiate between right guidance, which leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds, from misguidance, which leads to anxiety, stress and punishment in both worlds. It they fail to sincerely repent, they will continue living a difficult and stressful life, despite having the world at their feet, without realizing the source of their troubles. Instead, they will blame other things for their stressful life, such as their spouse, children, friends and relatives, and as a result they will sever their ties with these things. But this will only increase their stress and anxiety in this world, as these things were not the source of their troubles. Because of their behaviour they will not be able to overcome the difficulties they face in this world, such as the death of a beloved, which will only plunge them deeper into mental and physical problems. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 16:

“Those are the ones who have purchased error [in exchange] for guidance, so their transaction has brought no profit, nor were they guided.”

Muslims must avoid this outcome by avoiding the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, through insincerity in intention and actions. Instead, they must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they obtain peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 16:

“Those are the ones who have purchased error [in exchange] for guidance, so their transaction has brought no profit, nor were they guided.”

Muslims have been granted the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They both make it clear how one must use the blessings they have been granted so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Those who ignore learning and acting on these two sources of guidance, even if they believe in them, will exchange guidance for error, as their ignorance will cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted.

As warned by the end of verse 16, this attitude will lead to misguidance. This outcome is only avoided when one strives to learn and act on the two sources of guidance.

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 17-18

مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ ٱلَّذِى ٱسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّآ أَضَآءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُۥ ذَهَبَ ٱللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِى ظُلُمَٰتٍ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

صُمٌّۢ بُكْمٌ عُمْىٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

"*Their example is that of one who kindled a fire, but when it illuminated what was around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see.*

Deaf, dumb and blind - so they will not return [to the right path]."

The one who kindled the fire could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who kindled the fire of faith in order to benefit mankind. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 1:

“…[This is] a Book which We have revealed to you that you might bring mankind out of darknesses into the light by permission of their Lord - to the path of the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy.”

But the non-muslims denied the truth even though it was clear to them. In respect to the non-muslims of Mecca, as they spent their whole lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they knew he was no liar. As they were masters of the Arabic language, they knew the Holy Quran were not the words of a created being otherwise they would have produced something like it, thereby proving it was not divine. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 23:

“And if you are in some doubt, concerning what We sent down upon Our special devotee, then bring one chapter like it, and call upon all your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.”

In respect to the people of the book living Medina, they clearly recognized the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran as they were both described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

But even though the truth was clear to both groups, they stubbornly rejected it out of fear of losing the worldly things they had obtained, such as wealth and leadership. They feared Islam would force them to alter their behaviour, which would prevent them from gaining more worldly things, and it force them to use the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. As their desires for worldly gain overpowered them, they could not submit to the truth and instead chose to oppose it in order to preserve their social position. This is the reason why the majority of the affluent people in history were the first to reject and oppose the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. Because of their attitude, Allah, the Exalted, removed the light of faith so that they could not benefit from it and allowed the fire of Islam to remain, so that it destroyed them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 17:

“…but when it illuminated what was around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see.”

Chapter 61 As Saf, verses 8-9:

“They want to extinguish the light of Allāh with their mouths, but Allāh will perfect His light, although the disbelievers dislike it. It is He who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth to manifest it over all religion, although those who associate others with Allāh dislike it.”

When light is removed one cannot observe their surroundings. As a result, they will not be able to differentiate between the things which benefit them from those which will harm them. Nor will they be able to observe and journey down the right path in order to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. As a result, this person will live their life wandering blindly from one problem to the next, living a life devoid of peace of mind, even if they have the world at their feet. As they do not recognize nor accept the truth, they will not use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will only increase their difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 17:

“…but when it illuminated what was around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see. Deaf, dumb and blind - so they will not return [to the right path].”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

The only way one can avoid this outcome is when they accept and act on the truth of Islam. This will ensure they clearly observe the difference between the things which harm them from those which benefit them. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This in turn will lead to peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 17-18:

“Their example is that of one who kindled a fire, but when it illuminated what was around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see. Deaf, dumb and blind - so they will not return [to the right path].”

These verses also indicate the importance for a muslim to benefit others through the light of faith. One can only achieve this by representing Islam correctly through their actions and speech. This is achieved when one learns and acts on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When a muslim fails to behave in this manner they will misrepresent Islam. Failing one’s duty to correctly represent Islam to the rest of the world is something a muslim will not get away with in this world or on Judgement Day. This is a duty that falls on every muslim’s shoulders the moment they accept Islam as their faith and way of life.

In addition, the main verses also make it clear that the only way one can correctly use the senses and faculties they have been granted is in the light and guidance of faith. When the light of faith is removed, then one’s senses become blind and as a result they will only lead them to difficulties in both worlds. This is quite obvious to observe, even on a national level. When a society abandons faith and belittles its importance, it will always lead to injustice and a lack of wellbeing for its members. Irrespective of how good

the law in this society may be, the moment people feel they can escape the authorities, they will do wrong in order to gain some worldly benefit. Only the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which is a direct result of the light of faith, can prevent this attitude. Without faith, one will lean towards their desires and biases and as a result they will never behave justly with others. This will cause injustice to spread across society.

In addition, when one's senses become blind, then they will blindly follow social media, culture, fashion and society. These things will become Gods for them, Gods which will order them to misuse the blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted. They will then spend their entire life trying to please these Gods and as a result they will neglect the things which lead to their happiness. This will only harm their mental and physical well-being in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 18:

"Deaf, dumb and blind - so they will not return [to the right path]."

Whereas, when one uses their faculties and senses in the light of faith, they will obey none other than Allah, the Exalted, Who only commands and forbids what is best for them. They will possess and obey only one God instead of multiple Gods, such as social media, fashion and culture. This will increase their mental and physical well-being, just like an employee who only answers to one supervisor instead of multiple supervisors. They will then use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which will lead to further peace of mind and body in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 17-18:

“Their example is that of one who kindled a fire, but when it illuminated what was around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see. Deaf, dumb and blind - so they will not return [to the right path].”

Without the light of faith, one’s life becomes meaningless and aimless. As a result, they will blindly wander in this world without understanding their purpose. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”

Because of their attitude, they will fail to fulfill their purpose, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. This is achieved when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When one fails to fulfil their purpose, they become like an invention which fails to fulfil its primary function, even if they achieved much worldly success. As a result, they will lead an empty and meaningless life. If they fail to recognize and accept the truth, then when they reach the Day of Judgement, they may well be discarded, just like an item which fails to fulfil its primary function of creation is discarded.

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 19-20

أَوْ كَصَيِّبٍ مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَٰتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصَٰبِعَهُمْ فِىٓ ءَاذَانِهِم مِّنَ ٱلصَّوَٰعِقِ حَذَرَ ٱلْمَوْتِ وَٱللَّهُ مُحِيطٌۢ بِٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

يَكَادُ ٱلْبَرْقُ يَخْطَفُ أَبْصَٰرَهُمْ كُلَّمَآ أَضَآءَ لَهُم مَّشَوْا۟ فِيهِ وَإِذَآ أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا۟ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَٰرِهِمْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

"Or [it is] like a rainstorm from the sky within which is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps in dread of death. But Allah is encompassing of the disbelievers.

The lightning almost snatches away their sight. Every time it lights [the way] for them, they walk therein; but when darkness comes over them, they stand [still]. And if Allah had willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent."

These verses refer to the hypocrites in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who pretended to accept Islam in order to gain worldly benefits, such as the spoils of war. The thunder and lightning could be referring to Islam and the responsibilities attached to it, such as using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As the hypocrites disliked the responsibilities of Islam, they attempted to ignore them, just like someone who blocks their ears with their fingers trying to ignore what is said to them. Every time new verses of the Holy Quran were revealed from the Heavens, just like rain descends from the Heavens, it is as if death had descended upon them, as these verses directly challenged their desires. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 64:

“The hypocrites are apprehensive lest a surah be revealed about them, informing them of what is in their hearts…”

And chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verse 4:

“…they think that every shout is against them…”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 19-20:

"…They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps in dread of death…The lightning almost snatches away their sight."

These types of people may fool others into believing that they are devote muslims yet Allah, the Exalted, has encompassed them with His knowledge and power. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 19:

"…But Allah is encompassing of the disbelievers."

As a result of their evil intentions, they good actions will be wasted in this world and Allah, the Exalted, will ensure they are humiliated in both worlds. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 23:

"And We will approach what they have done of deeds and make them as dust dispersed."

As they have outwardly accepted Islam, when the light of Islam is shown to them they fulfill its easy aspects. But whenever they face the inevitable tests and difficulties of accepting Islam, they refuse to move forward in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 20:

"…Every time it lights [the way] for them, they walk therein; but when darkness comes over them, they stand [still]…"

This is like the muslim who is pleased with Allah, the Exalted, when they face times of ease but when they face difficulties they become angry and disobedient, as if they should be spared all difficulties just because they accepted Islam. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

"And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss."

Irrespective of if a person is obedient to Allah, the Exalted, or not, they will face tests and difficulties in this world, as this is the very purpose of life in this world. Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 2:

"[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is better in deed…"

A person is tested with times of ease to see whether they show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him. And a person is tested with times of difficulties to see whether they remain patient. This involves avoiding complaining through one’s speech or actions and remaining sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. The one who behaves in this manner will succeed in every situation they face. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. A muslim must strive to learn and understand this truth by adopting certainty of faith. Certainty of faith will aid a muslim to remain firm in both times of ease and difficulties. Certainty of faith is achieved by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that one truly understands the consequences of remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in both times of ease and difficulties and the consequences of failing to do so. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 19:

“Or [it is] like a rainstorm from the sky within which is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps in dread of death. But Allāh is encompassing of the disbelievers.”

A muslim can mimic the attitude mentioned in this verse by ignoring the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as if they have stuck their fingers in their ears refusing to listen, understand and act on these two sources of guidance. A muslim must understand that the concept of ignorance is bliss will never hold up in the court of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, this attitude does not even hold up in worldly situations, as the person who has taken on a responsibility, such as becoming a licensed driver, is obliged to learn and act upon the rules attached to it, such as respecting the speed limits. Similarly, the one who has accepted Islam, has accepted the responsibilities which accompany it, such as the responsibility of learning and acting on the two sources of guidance. Therefore, ignoring the teachings of Islam and then claiming ignorance will never be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. In addition, the ignorant is bliss attitude will not prevent them from facing the consequences of their actions in this world or the next. As indicated by the last part of this verse, this is an inevitable and unescapable reality every single person will face. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 19:

“…*But Allāh is encompassing of the disbelievers.”*

In addition, ignorance only leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who is ignorant lacks the knowledge to obey Him, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, ignorance of Islamic teachings only leads to a miserable life in this world and difficulties in the next. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 20:

“The lightning almost snatches away their sight. Every time it lights [the way] for them, they walk therein; but when darkness comes over them, they stand [still]. And if Allah had willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent.”

Even though this type of person behaves hypocritically with Allah, the Exalted, and only obeys Him for the sake of worldly gain and only during times of ease, none the less, Allah, the Exalted, still grants them opportunity after opportunity to mend their ways. He allows their faculties to remain intact so that they can recognize and accept right guidance, as they have outwardly accepted the light of faith, unlike the person mentioned in the previous verses, who denied the light of faith and as a result their faculties and senses were sealed. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 17-18:

"Their example is that of one who kindled a fire, but when it illuminated what was around him, Allāh took away their light and left them in darkness [so] they could not see. Deaf, dumb and blind - so they will not return [to the right path]."

A person must therefore take the opportunities granted by Allah, the Exalted, before they run out. They must never lose hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of what evil actions they may have done. If they are willingly to sincerely repent, then the door of forgiveness and mercy is wide open. Sincere repentance involves regretting the sins, firmly promising not to return to them, asking for forgiveness from Allah, the Exalted, and those who have been wronged, as long as this does not lead to further problems, and it involves making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Just like Allah, the Exalted, is capable to take away the senses and faculties of a person because of their persistent disobedience so that they continue to wander blindly in this world, He is capable of forgiving and guiding the sinner if they sincerely repent to Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 20:

“The lightning almost snatches away their sight…And if Allah had willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent.”

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 21-22

يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكُمْ وَٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلْأَرْضَ فِرَٰشًا وَٱلسَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۖ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا۟ لِلَّهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

"O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous.

[He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know."

The first thing to note is that Islam, unlike many other religions, is a religion for all people, irrespective of their gender, ethnicity or any other worldly barrier which separates people from one another. The thing which makes one superior to another is then mentioned in these verses: the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 21:

"O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you…"

And chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you…"

As the Creator of all is One, it means all are equal in His sight and no one has superiority over another except in how much they sincerely obey Him.

The worship of Allah, the Exalted, the Creator of all things, does not only include a few daily, monthly and annual rituals. It in fact, involves sincerely

obeying Him in every situation and how one uses every blessing they have been granted, those which are internal, such as one's health, and those blessings which are external, such as one's wealth and time. One of the greatest weapons of the Devil is to separate these two things so that a muslim is fooled into believing worshipping Allah, the Exalted, only involves some rituals and Allah, the Exalted, does not care about what one does in their day to day activities or how they use the blessings they have been granted.

The fact that Allah, the Exalted, created and continuously provides people with countless blessings, is enough of a reason to sincerely obey Him. A person should never become the slave of another person, a person who is a creation just like them. This can occur when one obeys another person in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Nor should one become a slave to the worldly inventions of people, such as social media, fashion and culture. This can occur when one prioritizes following these things over sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. As all people are equal, one should only submit to and obey their Creator: Allah, the Exalted. The one who takes multiple lords will lead a stressed and difficult life, just like the employee who answers to multiple supervisors. Whereas, the one who only obeys Allah, the Exalted, will obtain a relaxed and easy-going life, as Allah, the Exalted, does not demand things which a person cannot bear and everything He commands benefits none but the person themself. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…"

And chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 29:

“Allāh presents an example: a man [i.e., slave] owned by quarreling partners and another belonging exclusively to one man - are they equal in comparison? Praise be to Allāh! But most of them do not know.”

When one submits solely to Allah, the Exalted, and obeys Him, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will adopt the path of righteousness which leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 21:

“O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The past people are mentioned in the main verses, so that one is encouraged to observe the people that came before them, the choices they made, meaning, whether to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, or not, and the consequences of their choices. This alone is enough for one to understand that wellbeing, peace and success in both worlds lie only in adopting righteousness which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 21:

"O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous."

Mentioning the past people coupled with the command to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, also reminds people not to adopt wishful thinking. This can occur when one relies on the piety of their righteous ancestor hoping they will somehow same them on Judgement Day. By commanding all people to sincerely obey Him, Allah, the Exalted, has eliminated this false and misguided belief. Each person will be held accountable for their actions and must therefore strive to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, so that they too adopt righteousness like their righteous ancestors. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 39:

"And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives."

As advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, a muslim cannot become righteous unless they avoid something which is lawful out of fear it may take them to something which is unlawful. This Hadith is enough to eliminate the foolish attitude that as long as something is lawful one can and should do it. It is important to understand that just because one is allowed to do a particular action, does not mean they should do it. For example, over eating is not considered a sin in Islam, yet a wise person will not over eat as it leads to many health problems. The vast majority of sins people commit begin from lawful actions. For example, backbiting and slandering others often results from vain speech, speech which is lawful in Islam. People often fall into a life of crime when they befriend certain people. Befriending these types of people is not a sin, yet it can lead to many. It is easy for a person to waste their blessings, such as their wealth, when they utilize them on lawful yet unnecessary things. The examples of how a lawful thing can lead to unlawful things are virtually endless. Therefore, muslims must avoid this trap by adhering to fulfilling their necessities and responsibilities as much as possible. This will ensure they minimize interacting with the lawful things which could potentially take them to unlawful things.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 22:

"*[He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you…"*

When one observes the perfect balanced systems within the Heavens and the Earth, such as the perfect distance the Sun is from the Earth, the water cycle which ensures the creation obtains palatable water and water needed for growing crops, the perfect density of the oceans and seas, so that ships can sail on top of them while sea life thrives within them, the perfect structure of the Earth, whereby buildings can be built on top of it while weak crops and plants can burst out from within it, and many more systems, they will realize that these perfectly balanced systems cannot occur randomly. Nor can multiple Gods exist, as each one would desire something different, which would lead cause chaos to these perfectly balanced systems within the Heavens and the Earth. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

"Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined…"

When one sincerely reflects on these perfect balanced systems within the Heavens and the Earth with an open mind, they will have no choice but to admit the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated at the end of verse 22. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 22:

"…*So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know."*

But as admitting this truth directly challenges the lifestyle of many people, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing

to themselves, they associate partners with Allah, the Exalted, either directly by worshipping false deities or indirectly by obeying their own desires or the desires of others, such as society, fashion and culture. But this only leads them down the path of misery, stress and anxiety in both worlds, as the very worldly things they obtain through their behaviour becomes a source of stress for them, such as their family, wealth, careers and businesses. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, muslims must avoid associating things with Allah, the Exalted, directly or indirectly by obeying and following things which lead to neglecting the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 23-24

وَإِن كُنتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا۟ بِسُورَةٍ مِّن مِّثْلِهِۦ وَٱدْعُوا۟ شُهَدَآءَكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ صَـٰدِقِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا۟ وَلَن تَفْعَلُوا۟ فَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱلنَّارَ ٱلَّتِي وَقُودُهَا ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱلْحِجَارَةُ ۖ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَـٰفِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down [the Quran] upon Our Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses [supporters] other than Allah, if you should be truthful.

But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is people and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.”

Generally speaking, the root of doubt is ignorance. When one fails to learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will be left with weak faith. Weak faith leads to doubting the promises and threats of Allah, the Exalted, and as a result, one will not strive to obtain His promises nor avoid His threats, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The rightly guided avoid doubts by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. This has been indicated in the earlier verses of this chapter. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 2-5:

"This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah. Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them. And who believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith]. Those are upon [right] guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful."

It is important to note that there is a big difference between the one who possesses strong faith and the one who is simply stubborn on their faith. The former learns and acts on Islamic knowledge and improves their behaviour and actions with the passing of time so that they increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, the stubborn muslim is ignorant of Islamic knowledge and simply blindly imitates others. As they avoid learning and acting on Islamic knowledge, they will not improve their behaviour and actions with the passing of time and in difficult situations they will find it extremely difficult to remain patient, even if they manage to hold onto their faith. One must avoid stubbornness, which is rooted in blind imitation, and instead adopt certainty of faith through learning and acting on

Islamic knowledge. This will ensure they remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all situations and far away from any doubts which can corrupt their faith.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 23:

"*And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down [the Quran] upon Our Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him]…"*

The next thing to note is that the highest station a person can achieve is being a devoted servant of Allah, the Exalted. If there was a higher rank than this, Allah, the Exalted, would have called the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, according to it. Even Prophethood itself is rooted in servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. It is the very reason why the station of Prophethood is so high and lofty. One must therefore avoid worldly ranks, which are fickle by nature and lead to nothing but stress and trouble in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that craving for wealth and social status is more deadly to one's faith than two hungry wolves which are let loose on a herd of sheep. The one who behaves in this manner will ignore the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and as a result, they will lead a difficult life in both worlds, even if they have the world at their feet. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Instead, one must strive to achieve the highest rank possible by becoming a sincere servant of Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved when one practically follows in the footsteps of the greatest servant of Allah, the Exalted: the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...""

As servanthood to Allah, the Exalted, protects one from becoming a servant and slave to all other things, such as social media, fashion, culture and people, one will achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

As the non-muslim Arabs were masters of the Arabic language, Allah, the Exalted, laid down a permanent challenge to them and by extension to all mankind to produce a chapter similar to the Holy Quran in order to prove that its origins is not divine. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 23-24:

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down [the Quran] upon Our Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses [supporters] other than Allah, if you should be truthful. But if you do not - and you will never be able to…”

This challenge is not only to produce verses which match the rhythmic style of the Holy Quran but to produce verses and a chapter which matches every aspect of the Holy Quran, such as its all encompassing nature, its ability to be applied to every situation, in every place and time, its ability to be understood and applied by ignorant and knowledgeable people, its ability to provide practical advice which can be easily applied in one’s life instead of presenting concepts which sound useful but cannot be applied practically.

To sum up, when studying the Holy Quran one will realize that it contains different levels of knowledge through both obvious and subtle meanings. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 1:

"…[This is] a Book whose verses are perfected and then presented in detail from [one who is] Wise and Aware."

The expressions in the Holy Quran are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a straight forward way. Its words and verses are extremely eloquent and no other book can surpass it. The Holy Quran mentions the history of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commands every good and forbids every evil. Those which affect an individual and those which affect the entire society, so that justice, security and peace spreads throughout every home and community. The Holy Quran avoids exaggerations, lies or any falsehood, unlike poetry, stories and fables. All the verses are beneficial and can be applied practically to one's life. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran, different important lessons are highlighted. Unlike all other books, the Holy Quran does not bore a person when it is repeatedly studied. The Holy Quran provides promises and warnings and supports them with undeniable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses something which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides a simple and practical way of implementing it into one's life. It encourages people to fulfil the purpose of their creation, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, thereby ensuring they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. It makes the straight path obvious and appealing to the one who desires peace of mind and real success in both worlds. The knowledge of the Holy Quran is

timeless as it can be applied to every society and age. It is a cure for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It provides the solution for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever face. One only needs to observe history and how the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly benefited from its all-encompassing and timeless teachings. Centuries have passed yet not a single letter has been changed in the Holy Quran, as Allah, the Exalted, promised to preserve it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian."

Allah, the Exalted, discussed the root problems found within a community and detailed the practical remedy for all of them. By correcting root problems, the countless branch problems which stem from them would automatically be corrected. This is how the Holy Quran addressed all the things a person and society need to succeed in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 89:

"…And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things…"

This is the greatest timeless miracle Allah, the Exalted, bestowed upon His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But only those who seek and act on the truth will benefit from it whereas those who

seek their desires and cherry pick from it will only encounter loss in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 23-24:

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down [the Quran] upon Our Servant [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], then produce a surah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses [supporters] other than Allah, if you should be truthful. But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is people and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.”

Allah, the Exalted, specifically threatened the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book with the fire of Hell, as they were certain of the origins of the Holy Quran and the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The non-muslims of Mecca were masters of the Arabic language and clearly recognized its divine origin as they could not match a single verse of the Holy Quran and as they had spent their lives with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they knew he possessed the character of a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them. The people of the book in Medina recognized the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran as they had been discussed in detail in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

The only thing that prevented both groups from accepting the truth was their love for the worldly things they had gained through following their own desires, such as wealth and social status. They understood that submitting to Allah, the Exalted, through Islam meant that they had to behave and use the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Him. As their desires for worldly things were too strong, they rejected Islam.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 24:

“…*then fear the Fire, whose fuel is people and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.”*

Generally speaking, the fire is the abode of the disbelievers as they failed to fulfil the purpose of their creation. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship [obey] Me.”

Just like an item which fails to fulfil its purpose of creation is labeled a failure and is discarded, so will the invention named human be discarded on the Day of Judgement if they fail to fulfil their purpose of creation.

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verse 25

وَبَشِّرِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ
كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا۟ مِنْهَا مِن ثَمَرَةٍ رِّزْقًا قَالُوا۟ هَٰذَا ٱلَّذِى رُزِقْنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا۟ بِهِۦ مُتَشَٰبِهًا
وَلَهُمْ فِيهَآ أَزْوَٰجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

“And give good tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds that they will have gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow. Whenever they are provided with a provision of fruit therefrom, they will say, "This is what we were provided with before." And it is given to them in likeness. And they will have therein purified spouses, and they will abide therein eternally.”

This verse balances out the previous verses which threaten the arrogant and disobedient with punishment. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 23-24:

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down [the Quran] upon Our Servant then produce a sūrah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses [supporters] other than Allāh, if you should be truthful. But if you do not - and you will never be able to - then fear the Fire, whose fuel is people and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.”

It is important for muslims to strike a balance between fear of punishment, which aids one to avoid sins, and the hope for divine mercy, which encourages one towards performing righteous deeds. Being too extreme on either side can lead to misguidance. The one who fears excessively, which in this day and age is very rare, can lead one to giving up in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. The one who hopes in the mercy and forgiveness Allah, the Exalted, in an unbalanced way will adopt wishful thinking. This involves persisting in His disobedience while believing one will be forgiven. As warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459, wishful thinking has no value in Islam. One must strike a balance between the two so that they remain on the straight rightly guided path.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 25:

“And give good tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds…”

The next thing to note is that good tidings are only useful to those who act on them, just like warnings are only useful to those who act on them, such as road hazard signs. Actualizing these good tidings is then mentioned in the main verses, which involves adopting true belief that is proven practically, through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This verse, like countless others, makes it clear that internal faith is not good enough to lead one to peace of mind and success in both worlds until it is supported by physical actions, in the form of the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Separating belief from actions is one of the greatest tricks of the Devil. He convinces muslims that simply believing in Islam is enough for salvation in both worlds. Behaving in this manner is one of the greatest reasons why muslims fail to obtain peace of mind, even though they believe in the truth. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 124:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 25:

“And give good tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds that they will have gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow. Whenever they are provided with a provision of fruit therefrom, they will say, "This is what we were provided with before." And it is given to them in likeness…”

The before could be referring to the fruits they ate during their lives on Earth. Fruits from Paradise may look similar to the fruits of this world yet their good taste will be much greater. The before could also be referring to being provided the same fruit in Paradise. It is part of human nature to get bored or fed up with things when they are done repeatedly. But this will not occur in Paradise. Repeated experiences within Paradise will always have a new and different shade of enjoyment which will continue to occur forever. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 25:

“…and they will abide therein eternally.”

Understanding this reality should encourage a muslim to aim for Paradise. As indicated by the start of the main verse, this is only achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Even though the true perception of Paradise is beyond the comprehension of people, Allah, the Exalted, mentions certain things of Paradise, such as fruits, which people can, to a limited extent, understand in order to increase their efforts for obtaining Paradise. It would be difficult for many muslims to strive for something they cannot comprehend at all. In addition, the Holy Quran purposely mentions things which can easily be comprehended by all people, irrespective of the differences between them, such as their social class. This is one of the profound wisdoms of the Holy Quran as it always discusses things according to the level and comprehension of the universal listener.

Finally, the fact that the hereafter is eternal, reminds muslims that this world is temporary. A wise person must not sacrifice eternity for the sake of a fleeting and temporary enjoyment. This does not mean they should abandon this world. Instead, they must aim to obtain peace of mind in the moment they spend in this world and in the eternal hereafter as well, by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 45:

“And on the Day when He will gather them, [it will be] as if they had not remained [in the world] but an hour of the day..."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 25:

“…And they will have therein purified spouses…”

Allah, the Exalted, will grant purified spouses to the people of Paradise so that they find comfort and peace with them. The one who desires this particular blessing should aim to find a spouse in this world who directs them to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned muslims to marry someone for the sake of piety, meaning, how much they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and not solely and primarily for worldly reasons such as wealth, lineage or beauty, otherwise they will find nothing but loss. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090. Put simply, a righteous spouse in this world will encourage one to gain the purified spouse in the hereafter.

In addition, a purified spouse will only be granted to the one who is purified. This indicates that one must strive hard to purify all aspects of their character. They must purify their intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and therefore, do not desire nor hope for any type of gratitude

from people. They must purify their speech so that they speak what is good or remain silent. They must purify their actions by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And they must purify their character by replacing their negative traits with the positive ones discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who strives to purify themself in this manner will obtain a purified spiritual heart. This leads to safety and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verses 88-89:

“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.”

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 26-27

۞ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِۦٓ أَن يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟
فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَآ أَرَادَ ٱللَّهُ بِهَٰذَا
مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِۦ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِى بِهِۦ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِۦٓ إِلَّا ٱلْفَٰسِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

ٱلَّذِينَ يَنقُضُونَ عَهْدَ ٱللَّهِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مِيثَٰقِهِۦ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَآ أَمَرَ ٱللَّهُ بِهِۦٓ أَن يُوصَلَ
وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْخَٰسِرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

“Indeed, Allah is not timid to present an example - that of a mosquito or what is smaller than it. And those who have believed know that it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say, "What did Allah intend by this as an example?" He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient.

Who break the covenant of Allah after contracting it and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined and cause corruption on earth. It is those who are the losers.”

It is a great mercy from Allah, the Exalted, to mankind that He does not see it beneath His infinite dignity to teach mankind according to their very limited capacity and understanding. One must adopt this divine attitude according to their created level. One must never be shy to do anything which is connected to what is good and beneficial, such as seeking knowledge or advising others on what is good and warning them against what is evil, according to the etiquettes and manners taught by Islam. One must never mistake shyness with weakness. Shyness does not prevent one from doing what is right while weakness does.

In addition, one of the great qualities of the Holy Quran is that through it Allah, the Exalted, teaches in a way which is easy to understand and practically apply into the lives of all people, irrespective of the level of understanding or knowledge they possess. These teachings are timeless as they can be applied at any time period and by all people, till the end of time. This is one of the miracles indicating the divine origin of the Holy Quran. It is this miracle the believers understand, those who approach the Holy Quran with an open mind, ready to accept its advice, knowing it is best for them even if it contradicts their desires. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 26:

“Indeed, Allah is not timid to present an example - that of a mosquito or what is smaller than it. And those who have believed know that it is the truth from their Lord…”

But those who cannot handle submitting to a higher authority and living by a code of conduct which befits humanity, as it contradicts their desires, will not understand this miracle of the Holy Quran and instead question how Allah,

the Exalted, being the Lord of the worlds, could speak about such small and insignificant things, such as a mosquito. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 26:

"…*But as for those who disbelieve, they say, "What did Allah intend by this as an example?"…"*

They fail to understand that all of creation is similar to the size of a mosquito to Allah, the Exalted, so it makes no difference if He discusses something large in size, such as the Sun, or something small, such as a mosquito.

Failing to understand this miracle of the Holy Quran causes those who wish nothing except to pursue and fulfill their desires to turn away from it. As they choose to turn away from the truth of the Holy Quran and its simple yet profound teachings, Allah, the Exalted, allows them to turn away and leaves them wandering blindly in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 26:

"…He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient."

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 115:

“If anyone opposes the Messenger, after guidance has been made clear to him, and follows a path other than that of the believers, We shall leave him on his chosen path- We shall burn him in Hell, an evil destination.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 26:

“…He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient.”

But as indicated by this verse, those who understand this miracle of the Holy Quran and approach it with an open mind, ready to submit to its teachings,

knowing it is best for them, will be guided to understanding and acting on its teachings so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

It is important to note that understanding this miracle of the Holy Quran requires one to adopt strong faith. This is only possible when one strives to learn and act on the Holy Quran so that they can appreciate its miraculous nature. Ignorance will prevent one from understanding this miracle of the Holy Quran and therefore will prevent them from learning and acting on it.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 26-27:

"…He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient. Who break the covenant of Allah after contracting it and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined and cause corruption on earth…"

When one fails to accept and act on the guidance and teachings of the Holy Quran it will cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. The connection between a person and using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, is something which Allah, the Exalted, has commanded to be joined. In fact, using them in the right way was the covenant taken from all of mankind before they were sent to this Earth, as this an important aspect of accepting Allah, the Exalted, as one's Lord. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 172:

"And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], "Am I not your Lord?" They said, "Yes, we have testified." [This] - lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, "Indeed, we were of this unaware.""

The one who approaches the Holy Quran with an open mind, willing to accept clear evidence and submit to its teachings, even if it contradicts their desires, will cause this covenant, which is deeply embedded in the human soul, to re-emerge so that they become convinced of the truthfulness of Islam. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth…"

It is important to note that every muslim retook this covenant with Allah, the Exalted, of sincerely obeying Him, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, when they accepted Islam as their faith. Failing to behave in this manner would cause them to break this covenant. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 26-27:

"…He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient. Who break the covenant of Allah after contracting it…"

When one breaks the covenant of sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, then it only leads to abusing the bonds their possess will people, such as their relatives, friends, employees, employers, neighbours, etc. It is the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and upholding the covenant taken from Him which prevents people from wronging others. The government can only go so far in preventing crimes. Justice and peace can only prevail within a society when the fear of Allah, the Exalted, is present. This ensures one does not wrong others and instead encourages them to fulfill their rights according to the teachings of Islam. This reality is quite evident when one observes the societies which abandoned faith and those in history which implemented the teachings of Islam and possessed the fear of Allah, the Exalted. When the bonds between people, families, communities and nations are not maintained correctly it will affect every level of human interaction, such as the financial, political and social levels. The outcome of this is the spread of corruption on a global scale. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 26-27:

“…He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient. Who break the covenant of Allah after contracting it and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined and cause corruption on earth…”

Those who fail to fulfil the covenant of Allah, the Exalted, will destroy the relationships they have with people and spread corruption within the community. This outcome does not affect Allah, the Exalted. It only rebounds on the perpetrators as it leads them to trouble, stress, difficulties and loss in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 27:

“…It is those who are the losers.”

And chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 41:

“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He [i.e., Allāh] may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].”

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 28-29

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَكُنتُمْ أَمْوَٰتًا فَأَحْيَٰكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

هُوَ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَ لَكُم مَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ ٱسْتَوَىٰٓ إِلَى ٱلسَّمَآءِ فَسَوَّىٰهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَٰوَٰتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

“How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were lifeless and He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned.

It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth. Then He directed Himself to the heaven and made them seven heavens, and He is Knowing of all things.”

The first thing to note is that true belief in Allah, the Exalted, involves internal belief supported by physical actions of obedience. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, as indicated by the main verses, this obedience is the reason why Allah, the Exalted, granted humans life. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 28:

"How can you disbelieve in Allāh when you were lifeless and He brought you to life…"

And chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me."

In addition, it is important to note that the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book in Medina, the first two groups which were addressed by the Holy Quran, did believe in Allah, the Exalted. But as they associated things with him and attributed partners to Him, such as idols or granting scholars the power to dictate the rules and regulations of faith, they were labeled unbelievers in this verse. This indicates that true belief lies solely in sincerely obeying and following the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Any deviation from this leads to misguidance and even disbelief.

This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not rooted in Islam is rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606. One must therefore avoid other actions which are not rooted in the two sources of guidance, even if they are good deeds and instead focus their full efforts on learning and acting on the two sources of guidance, as peace of mind and success lies only in this. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 132:

"And obey Allāh and the Messenger that you may obtain mercy."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 28:

"…you were lifeless and He brought you to life…"

As one's time span on Earth is very limited and unknown, they must take advantage of every opportunity and blessing they have been granted in order to obtain peace of mind and body in this world, which is the greatest worldly blessing one can obtain, and peace of mind and success in the hereafter. This is only achieved through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, the Creator of all things. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if one neglects their purpose and instead chooses to misuse their blessings in their short stay in this world, then they will lead a life of constriction and misery in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

A wise person would not sacrifice eternity of bliss for a single moment of a fleeting enjoyment, which leads to stress in both worlds. One should not delay sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, believing they will do so in elderly age. This misguided belief is one of the greatest traps of the Devil. He does not try to convince muslims the hereafter does not exist, as this is futile endeavor. Instead, he encourages them to delay sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and convinces them that peace of mind lies in pursuing worldly desires. The one who falls for his advice loses out in both worlds, as ignoring Allah, the Exalted, only leads to misery and stress in both worlds, even if one manages to gather the entire world. As indicated in the main verses, as Allah, the Exalted, alone created mankind, He alone controls their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. If they sincerely obey Him, He will grant them

peace of mind and success in both worlds. But if they disobey Him, then everything they obtain in this world will only become a source of their stress and misery in both worlds.

In addition, one should always remember that there is no guarantee they will live to elderly age, as many healthy young people die all the time. Even if one manages to reach elderly age, their attitude of hoping for a longer life will only urge them to continue in their usual habit of ignoring Allah, the Exalted, until death reaches them unprepared.

The One who created humans from nothing will find it easier to bring them back when they have turned into dust and bones, as creating something from nothing is harder than creating something from parts. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 28:

"…He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life…"

And chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 51:

"…And they will say, "Who will restore us?" Say, "He who brought you forth the first time."…"

As indicated by verse 28, the time between life and resurrection refers to one's stay in their grave, which in some form or fashion everybody will experience. The light required to illuminate one's dark grave and protect them from its punishments is obtained in this world through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Just like a muslim strives hard to beauty their temporal worldly home, they must strive harder to illuminate their grave, as their stay in it will be long and its dangers greater than what one can face in this world. If one ignores obtaining this light in this world, then they will be left to the horrors and darkness of their grave and what follows their resurrection will only be worse.

Whether one chooses to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, or not, all will be returned to Him on Judgement Day in order to be questioned whether they fulfilled their purpose of creation or not. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 28:

"…He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned."

One must note the sequence of this verse to understand that their resurrection and final judgement will be determined by how they died. If they died on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the

Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they will be resurrected in a good state. But if they die while persisting on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they will be resurrected in a bad state. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232. One can determine how they will die based on the sequence of this verse. Meaning, the way one lives will determine how they will die. If they persist on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they will die in a good state. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they will die and be resurrected in a bad state. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, verse 28 indicates that as Allah, the Exalted, chose and decided the beginning, middle and ultimate end for each person, they should therefore obey none other than Him. When He has complete control over the entire existence of a person, it does not make sense to disobey Him. In fact, as indicated by verse 29, everything Allah, the Exalted, decides for people during their lives is best for them, even if they do not recognize the wisdoms behind His choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Understanding this reality will aid one in remaining patient during times of difficulties. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one's actions or words and maintaining their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 28-29:

"…He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned. It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth…"

The Earth and the blessings within them were created for mankind to sustain themselves, use them to obtain peace of mind in this world and pass their final test on Judgement Day successfully, by using them correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the Creator of all blessings. The one who

behaves in this manner has shown gratitude for the blessings of this Earth. This in turn leads to obtaining further blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

In addition, verses 28-29 make it clear that a person was created in order to obey Allah, the Exalted, and worldly blessings were created in order to aid one to fulfill this noble purpose. One must not confuse this fact by behaving as if they were created to simply obtain, enjoy and hoard worldly blessings while ignoring Allah, the Exalted. One’s stay in this world is similar to a person in a foreign country on a work visa. Their purpose in that country is to earn wealth to take back to their homeland after their visa expires. They are not in that foreign country for the sake of entertainment and fun. Similarly, one’s purpose in this world is to gather good deeds, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah 29:

“It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth…”

It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, allocated one's lawful provision 50,000 thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, one must never pursue the unlawful out of impatience or greed. Just like one's intention is the internal foundation of their faith similarly, pursuing and utilizing the lawful is the external foundation of one's faith. If one utilizes the unlawful they will destroy every action that is built on it. This leads to destruction in both worlds.

Finally, this verse also indicates that Allah, the Exalted, does not want people to abandon the material world, somehow believing this is the path to salvation in the hereafter. This type of monasticism is not taught by Islam as it contradicts the very purpose of this world. Islam teaches a spiritual detachment from the material world not an entirely physical one. Simply put, the one who uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, is detached from these blessings. But if they use them in ways pleasing to themself, then they are attached to them. This is the difference between being attached to the material world and being detached from it and this therefore has nothing to do with how much or little worldly blessings one possesses. A pauper can be a worldly person just by pursuing their desires while a wealthy person can be detached from the world simply because they control their desires and use their blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah 29:

“It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth. Then He directed Himself to the heaven and made them seven heavens…”

Just like the blessings of the Earth were created to aid people to fulfill their purpose, similarly, the Heavens were created for this reason also. The Earth is the abode of physical provision, which is required to sustain people in this world while they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, the Heavens is the main source of spiritual provision, which is required to nurture one’s belief in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. When one observes the Heavens and the Earth and its perfectly balanced and synchronized systems, such as the perfect distance of the Sun from the Earth, the precise timings of the day and night, the changing of the seasons, the movement of the clouds and their involvement in the water cycle, and many other systems, it clearly points to a Creator and Sustainer, Allah, the Exalted. All these systems also point towards the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, as multiple Gods would desire and will different things and as a result nothing in the Heavens and the Earth would be balanced or synchronized. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined…”

When one reflects on the Heavens and the Earth with an open mind, they will acknowledge and accept the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and the inevitability of Judgement Day. All the perfect balanced systems clearly indicate a purpose and the fact that everything that has a beginning has an end, such as the day following the night. The only major thing within the universe which has not been balanced yet is the actions of people. The doers

of good do not get their full reward in this world, nor do the wrongdoers face full justice, even if they are punished by Allah, the Exalted, during their lives. All the perfect balanced systems within the universe clearly indicate that the actions of people, the major unbalanced thing in this universe, will also be balanced on Judgement Day. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 191:

“…and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.””

This reality has been indicated in the main verses under discussion as the creation of people and the Earth has been directly connected to Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 28-29:

“…He brought you to life; then He will cause you to die, then He will bring you [back] to life, and then to Him you will be returned. It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth. Then He directed Himself to the heaven and made them seven heavens…”

As indicated by the final part of verse 29, one should not be fooled into believing that after creating people and the Earth and appointing their final return and judgement, Allah, the Exalted, is unaware of what they do. Allah, the Exalted, must never be compared to a worldly king, who may have power and authority over the land but as he cannot keep constant tabs on his

people, he is unaware of what they do. Allah, the Exalted, did not create people and the Heavens and Earth in vain. Judgement Day will be established in order to make clear who fulfilled their purpose on Earth and who did not and to finally balance the great unbalanced thing in this universe, the actions of people. But as Allah, the Exalted, has knowledge of all things, this will not be a problem. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 29:

"…and He is Knowing of all things."

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 30-34

وَإِذۡ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٞ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ خَلِيفَةٗۖ قَالُوٓاْ أَتَجۡعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفۡسِدُ
فِيهَا وَيَسۡفِكُ ٱلدِّمَآءَ وَنَحۡنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمۡدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَۖ قَالَ إِنِّيٓ أَعۡلَمُ مَا لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ
٣٠

وَعَلَّمَ ءَادَمَ ٱلۡأَسۡمَآءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمۡ عَلَى ٱلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنۢبِـُٔونِي بِأَسۡمَآءِ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ إِن
كُنتُمۡ صَٰدِقِينَ ٣١

قَالُواْ سُبۡحَٰنَكَ لَا عِلۡمَ لَنَآ إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمۡتَنَآۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلۡعَلِيمُ ٱلۡحَكِيمُ ٣٢

قَالَ يَٰٓـَٔادَمُ أَنۢبِئۡهُم بِأَسۡمَآئِهِمۡۖ فَلَمَّآ أَنۢبَأَهُم بِأَسۡمَآئِهِمۡ قَالَ أَلَمۡ أَقُل لَّكُمۡ إِنِّيٓ أَعۡلَمُ غَيۡبَ
ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ وَأَعۡلَمُ مَا تُبۡدُونَ وَمَا كُنتُمۡ تَكۡتُمُونَ ٣٣

وَإِذۡ قُلۡنَا لِلۡمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ ٱسۡجُدُواْ لِأٓدَمَ فَسَجَدُوٓاْ إِلَّآ إِبۡلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَٱسۡتَكۡبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ
٣٤

“And when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes

corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?" He [Allah] said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."

And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful."

They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise."

He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed."

And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers."

These verses outline the purpose of mankind, namely, representing Allah, the Exalted, on Earth. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Muslims must fulfill their roles as the ambassadors of Allah, the Exalted, so that the true face of Islam is shown to the world. This became a duty on every muslim the moment they consciously accepted Islam as their faith. The same way a king would not be pleased with their disobedient ambassador, neither will Allah, the Exalted, be pleased with those muslims who fail to represent Him correctly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 30:

“And when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority."…”

The fact that no worldly authority ever lasts on the Earth, a muslim must therefore not delay fulfilling their role as the ambassador of Allah, the Exalted, to a later stage in their life they may not reach.

As indicated by verse 30, when one fails to fulfil their purpose of representing Allah, the Exalted, on Earth, it will cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. As a result, they will violate the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. This only leads to corruption within society. Only when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will they fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. This will cause the spread of peace and justice within society. Behaving in this manner is how

one praises and declares the perfection of Allah, the Exalted, on Earth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 30:

“And when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?"…”

The response of the Angels was not a criticism of the plan of Allah, the Exalted, as they are purified of behaving in such a manner. They were simply admitting their lack of knowledge and understanding on the purpose of the creation of mankind. Admitting one’s lack of knowledge and understanding is an important aspect of humility. No matter how much knowledge one may possess it will always be small compared to what they could learn. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 76:

“…but over every possessor of knowledge is one [more] knowing.”

Admitting one’s ignorance is also an important aspect of teaching and guiding others. One should never be shy to admit that they lack knowledge, as intentionally providing incorrect knowledge to others can lead to sins. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674. This humility of the Angels is further highlighted in the later verses of this chapter. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 32:

“They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 30:

“And when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?"…”

The reaction of the Angels also highlights their love and obedience for Allah, the Exalted. They did not desire for anyone within the creation to disobey Allah, the Exalted. They instead desired for all the creation to sincerely obey Him, just like they did. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

“…they [the angels] do not disobey Allāh in what He commands them but do what they are commanded.”

Adopting this type of guarded jealousy of the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is something muslims must adopt. They should not allow themselves nor others to disobey Him. They should strive hard to sincerely obey Him, by using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and sincerely repent whenever they happen to commit sins. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, sincerely promising to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. They should also gently command good and forbid evil according to the manners and etiquettes taught by Islam. Just like the Angels spoke up against the potential disobedience mankind could commit, muslims must speak up against the disobedience of others, especially their relatives. One must remember that a rotten apple will always corrupt others, as people adopt the characteristics of their companions. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534. Therefore, if one ignores the disobedience of others, even if they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, then eventually they will be affected negatively by their behaviour. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686. Only when one commands good and forbids evil correctly will they be protected from the negative effects of the disobedient and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 164:

"And when a community among them said, "Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allāh is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?" they [the advisors] said, "To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him.""

But if one only cares about themself and ignores the actions of others, it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their misguidance.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 30:

“And when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?" He [Allah] said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."”

It is important to note that this verse makes it clear that asking questions to someone in authority and superiority is acceptable in Islam, as long as good manners are shown. Allah, the Exalted, did not become angry with the response of the Angels, even though He had full right to become angry, as His knowledge, wisdom and will cannot be understood nor fathomed by any other. This completely contradicts the attitude of many muslims who advocate the importance of completely and utterly obeying one’s spiritual teacher in every situation without question. This incorrect attitude was only formed by those who desire leadership and superiority over others. If Allah, the Exalted, being the Lord of the worlds, did not get annoyed by the Angels question, then how can any mortal and weak creature become annoyed at someone questioning them? The correct attitude was understood and acted upon by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, the guides of mankind. They would regularly question each other whenever they disagreed over a matter, even if they were questioning someone considered senior to themself. But in every case they maintained respect and good

manners when they did so. A very famous example is when many Companions, including Umar Ibn Khattab, questioned the first Caliph of Islam, Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased with them, regarding his decision to fight the muslims who refused to donate the obligatory charity. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, was not offended by being questioned, he simply explained his reasoning to them and they accepted it after the matter was clarified to them. This has been discussed in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 7284 and 7285. Muslims must therefore avoid those people who advocate such strange and non-Islamic concepts and instead adopt an attitude whereby they question others in a respectful manner in order to obtain beneficial knowledge. This has been indicated in Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 7:

“Certainly were there in Joseph and his brothers signs for those who ask.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 30:

“…They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?" He [Allah] said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."”

Generally speaking, it is always important for a muslim to understand and accept their very limited knowledge and foresight when dealing with life and what it brings. They must understand that Allah, the Exalted, chooses the

best things for them according to His infinite knowledge, not according to the very limited knowledge or desires of people. The duty of a muslim is to simply remain sincerely obedient to Him, by showing patience in times of difficulties, which involves avoiding complaining verbally or physically and maintaining one's sincere obedience to Him, and by showing gratitude in times of ease, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. The one who behaves in this manner will travel through each situation with peace of mind and blessings. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

In addition, instead of showing anger towards His Angels, Allah, the Exalted, reminded them of His infinite knowledge and wisdom and hinted that He would reveal the reason of creating something which had the potential to disobey Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 31:

"And He taught Adam the names - all of them…"

The specific knowledge granted to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, has not been mentioned as it is not required to learn lessons from this event. This is an important lesson to understand when studying religious

knowledge. One must seek and question in order to gain knowledge but their seeking and questioning must be on topics which are relevant and beneficial to them. Put simply, if a particular topic or issue will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as donating the obligatory charity, one must seek out and act upon this knowledge. But if something will not be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as the specific knowledge granted to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, then they should avoid seeking this knowledge, as it is not relevant to them.

The thing to note is that Allah, the Exalted, granted the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, useful knowledge. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2645, that when Allah, the Exalted, desires good for someone He grants them Islamic knowledge. Each person must follow in the footsteps of their ancestor, the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, by seeking and acting on useful knowledge, both worldly and religious, so that they benefit themself and others in both worlds.

Allah, the Exalted, then explained the purpose of creating mankind to the Angels after they had previously questioned it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 30-31:

“They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?" He [Allah] said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know." And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful.""”

By granting knowledge to mankind, Allah, the Exalted, has favored them over many of His other creatures, as it is the source of recognizing Him and sincerely obeying Him. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though humans have the ability to commit great acts of evil yet through the knowledge granted to them, they also have the ability to rise above the level of animals in order to fulfil their role as the ambassadors of Allah, the Exalted. It is this characteristic that gives humans their superiority. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 31-33:

“And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful." They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise." He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names…”

This superiority has been indicated in the next few verses, where the Angels were commanded to prostrate to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, out of respect of what Allah, the Exalted, had granted him, namely, knowledge. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

“And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"…”

When Allah, the Exalted, questioned the Angels, they demonstrated their humility by admitting their lack of knowledge and added that the source of all knowledge is none other than Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 31-33:

“And He taught Adam the names - all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful." They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise." He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth?..."”

As mentioned earlier, admitting one’s lack of knowledge is a sign of wisdom and must be adopted by all in order to prevent the deadly sin of pride, an atom’s worth of which is enough to take someone to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Pride prevents one from accepting the truth when it is presented to them by others and it involves looking down upon others. Both elements are foolish as the truth is required to rightly guide people and therefore must be accepted at all times and as the ultimate end of each person is unknown, it is foolish to look down upon others. No matter what knowledge or status one obtains, it is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in the form of inspiration, knowledge, strength and the opportunity to obtain a successful outcome. Therefore, one must acknowledge their weakness and the favour of Allah, the Exalted, on

them instead of adopting pride. In addition, admitting one's ignorance is also necessary in order to avoid misguiding others.

The Angels also mentioned the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note that wisdom aids one to use their knowledge in the correct manner. When a person adopts wisdom, they will use their knowledge correctly so that they benefit themself and others in both worlds. One should always bear in mind that knowledge is only beneficial and useful for oneself and others when it is used correctly. The mentioning of the divine knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, indicates that the choice of creating a successive authority on Earth is rooted in knowledge and wisdom. This indicates that people have a purpose on this Earth, their presence on Earth is not random nor an accident. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me."

Understanding this reality will aid one to strive to fulfil their purpose on this Earth, which is to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who strives to fulfill their purpose will ensure all their activities, worldly or religious, to be rooted in their purpose. This will ensure every action and word they speak will aid them to fulfil their purpose on Earth. The one who fulfils their purpose will lead a meaningful and purposeful existence on Earth, which will lead to peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who ignores their purpose will lead an aimless and pointless existence in this world, even if they achieve much worldly success. Just like an object which fails to fulfil its primary reason of creation is labelled a failure, even if it possesses many other good features, so will the invention named human be labelled a failure if they fail to fulfil their purpose of creation. Ignoring one's purpose will cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn leads to stress, anxiety and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 33:

“He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names…”

Generally speaking, this verse reminds muslims the importance of sharing useful knowledge. One must never hoard their knowledge as this reduces its positive effect in the lives of all people. One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe that those who shared their useful knowledge with others became known as the teachers of mankind whereas, those who greedily hoarded their knowledge were forgotten by history.

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds the Angels that His infinite knowledge and wisdom is beyond the understanding of creatures. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 33:

“He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names." And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth?...””

One must therefore trust the choices and decrees of Allah, the Exalted, regarding themself and their loved ones, even if the wisdoms behind them are hidden from them. They should firmly believe that Allah, the Exalted, decrees what is best for everyone involved and one’s duty is to simply maintain His obedience through both times of patience and gratitude, by

using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights a specific aspect of His knowledge. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 33:

"…He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed.""

Generally speaking, this is a powerful reminder for muslims to ensure that their inward intention and outward actions are directed at pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The foundation of Islam is one's hidden intention. If this is corrupt, then all of one's actions will be corrupt, even if they appear as good deeds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1. One must ensure they intend only to act and speak in order to please Allah, the Exalted, otherwise they will be told to gain their reward from the people they acted for on Judgement Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A sign of one's good intention is that they do not desire nor expect any gratitude or payback from any person and only hope in reward from Allah, the Exalted. This

attitude must be applied to all of one’s actions and speech, such as earning a livelihood and raising one’s children.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 33:

“…He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen [aspects] of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed."”

This statement was also a warning to the Devil that Allah, the Exalted, was fully aware of his hidden pride and jealousy for the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. He should have taken this opportunity and warning and sincerely repented to Allah, the Exalted. But as explained in the next verse, he failed to do this. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

“And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers.”

A muslim must learn to make use of the repeated opportunities and second chances Allah, the Exalted, grants them before their time runs out. Every moment is a new chance to change one’s way for the better and must be seized as reaching tomorrow is not guaranteed. One is not expected to

become a saint over night but they should take steps to improving their behaviour towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation. This is achieved when one sincerely learns and acts on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 61:

“And if Allāh were to impose blame on the people for their wrongdoing, He would not have left upon it [the earth] any creature, but He defers them for a specified term. And when their term has come, they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede [it].”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

“And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated…”

The Angels were commanded to prostrate to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, out of respect of the knowledge and abilities Allah, the Exalted, had granted Him. As mentioned earlier, this indicates the superiority of knowledge over worship. The Angels had countless acts of worship in their credit but as the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, possessed knowledge, his rank was superior. One must therefore strive to prioritize gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge over excessive acts of worship, as

the latter cannot even be done correctly without knowledge. Put simply, a few acts of worship completed according to knowledge is far superior to many acts of worship done in ignorance. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 219, that learning a single verse of the Holy Quran is better than offering 100 cycles of voluntary prayer and learning a single topic of Islamic knowledge is better than offering 1000 cycles of voluntary prayer.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

“And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers.”

Iblees, the Devil, was not an Angel but was from the Jinn. Chapter 18, verse 50.

“…except for Iblees. He was of the jinn”…

But due to his abundant acts of worship he was raised to the level of the Angels and the command to prostrate therefore included him also. The Devil

adopted arrogance as he saw himself superior to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 12:

“[Allāh] said, "What prevented you from prostrating when I commanded you?" [The Devil] said, "I am better than him. You created me from fire and created him from clay [earth]."”

He arrogantly overlooked the fact that one's outward appearance has no bearing on their rank. Ranks are decided by Allah, the Exalted, and the one who accepts Allah, the Exalted, as His Lord will not oppose this. The Devil was quick to judge the outward feature of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, but ignored the knowledge Allah, the Exalted, had granted him. One must avoid this cherry picking attitude whereby they adopt a negative mindset. This attitude can cause one to always interpret things in a negative way, which in turn leads to further sins, such as backbiting, gossiping and slander. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, that thinking positively about others is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly.

In addition, a muslim must understand that outward appearances or worldly standards, such as wealth, ethnicity or gender, do not make one superior to others. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that superiority is directly connected to how much one fears Allah, the Exalted. This involves sincerely obeying Him so that one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

Due to his arrogance, the Devil, clearly did not fear Allah, the Exalted, and he is therefore not superior to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, even if he was made from clay.

Pride is a deadly characteristic which must be avoided as it leads to destruction in both worlds. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, that even an atom's worth of pride is enough to take a person to Hell. Pride causes one to reject the truth when it is presented to them, as it directly challenges their desires and as it did not come from. The Devil rejected the truth by directly challenging the high status Allah, the Exalted, granted the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. Pride also causes one to look down upon people, thinking they are superior to others. Both consequences of pride are foolish to adopt as the truth is needed for one to remain rightly guided in both worldly and religious matters. Therefore, it should be accepted irrespective of who it comes from, as the source of truth is none but Allah, the Exalted. Looking down upon others is extremely foolish as one is not aware of their own status nor the status of others in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. As the ultimate end of people in the hereafter is unknown, it is foolish to look down upon others, as one cannot guarantee they will leave this world with faith. In addition, every worldly blessing one possesses has

been created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, therefore He alone is the innate owner of all blessings. Being proud over something which in reality belongs to someone else is foolish, just like the person who boasts about someone else's mansion. Pride therefore belongs only to Allah, the Exalted, and whoever tries to challenge Him will be punished in both worlds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4090.

The other deadly characteristic adopted by the Devil was envy. Envy is a major sin as it directly challenges the allocation of blessings chosen by Allah, the Exalted. The envier behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake granting a particular blessing to someone else instead of granting it to them. The Devil behaved as if the honor granted to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, belonged to him. One must avoid envy by understanding that Allah, the Exalted, grants each person what is best for them and therefore they must concentrate on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him and not concern themself with what others have been granted. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

"And if Allāh had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing."

One must dislike the feeling of envy and never let it influence their speech or actions towards the envied person. If one behaves in this manner it is hoped they will be pardoned for their envy. It is important to note that wishing for

similar things to what others have been granted without wishing for them to lose their blessings is lawful but disliked in worldly matters. If one must desire obtaining similar blessings others possess, they should be connected to religious blessings, such as useful knowledge and being charitable. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896.

In addition, this incident also warns people against craving excessively for leadership and authority. The Devil desired the rank of being the representative of Allah, the Exalted, on Earth and felt he was more worthy of it. His extreme desire for this leadership pushed him towards disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and other negative traits, such as pride and envy. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophe Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, that craving for leadership and wealth is more destructive to a person's faith than two hungry wolves that are set free on a herd of sheep. This is because craving excessively for these two things can easily push someone to disobeying Allah, the Exalted, when obtaining them, holding on to them and increasing them. It is always far safer to pursue lawful things according to one's needs and responsibilities. Behaving in this manner saves a person from stress and potential punishment in both worlds.

Furthermore, one must follow in the footsteps of the Angels who understood the reality of servanthood, namely, not to challenge the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, and instead submit to them with full obedience. The Devil behaved as a master and applied his own thinking to the commands of Allah, the Exalted. This attitude contradicts servanthood, as a servant only hears and obeys their Master at all times, knowing the Master only decides what is best for them in all situations. The Devil was the first innovator as he applied his own thinking to the command of Allah, the Exalted, instead of submitting to

it. One must avoid this attitude and instead adhere to the path of the Angels who avoided innovating and instead submitted to Allah, the Exalted, exactly how He commanded. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that any matter which is not rooted in Islam, meaning, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606. One must therefore adhere strictly to learning and acting on the two sources of guidance and avoid other actions, even if they appear good. The simple fact is that the more one acts on other things, the less they will learn and act on the two sources of guidance. This only leads to misguidance.

In addition, the Devil was the first to adopt a cherry picking attitude as he did not deny the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, nor worshipping Him but denied the single command to prostrate to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, out of respect to what Allah, the Exalted, had granted him. a muslim can behave in the same manner whereby they choose what Islamic teachings to accept and follow and which ones to ignore, according to their desires. The one who behaves in such a manner treats their faith like a coat which they put on and take off whenever they desire to. This contradicts the very definition of a muslim, which is to practically submit to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. A muslim must avoid the devilish attitude of cherry picking from Islamic teachings and instead approach every situation and use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they fulfill their purpose as the representative of Allah, the Exalted, and achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, adopting a cherry picking attitude will only cause one to forget Allah, the Exalted, and misuse the blessings they have been granted. This leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds, even if one accepts and obeys some of the teachings of Islam. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

“And [mention] when We said to the angels, "Prostrate before Adam"; so they prostrated, except for Iblees. He refused and was arrogant…”

This event also indicates the importance of striving to fulfill the rights of the creation in conjunction with the rights of Allah, the Exalted. The Devil's issue was with fulfilling the right of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, not fulfilling the right of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must avoid this imbalance and instead strive to firstly fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and also strive to fulfill the rights of the creation. This is achieved by treating others according to the teachings of Islam, which involves treating them in a way one desires to be treated by people. One must not be fooled into believing that fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, alone is enough for success. Islam makes it clear that justice will be established on Judgement Day. Those who wronged others, even if they fulfilled the rights of Allah, the Exalted, will be forced to hand their good deeds over to their victims and if necessary, they will take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may cause the wrongdoer to be hurled into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 34:

"…He refused and was arrogant and became of the disbelievers."

This verse also indicates a frightening reality. When a muslim persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and refuses to sincerely obey Him, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad,

peace and blessings be upon him, then they are in danger of adopting arrogance. This only increases one's disobedience to Him and as a result they may well leave this world without their faith. The Devil internally believed in Allah, the Exalted, yet due to his disobedience which led to arrogance, he became a disbeliever. If a muslim behaves in the same manner, by refusing to practically obey Allah, the Exalted, even if they claim to internally believe in Him, they may well follow in the footsteps of the Devil and die as a non-muslim. This is the greatest loss. This occurs as one's faith must be nourished with practical obedience just like a plant must be nourished with water, sunlight and nutrients. Just like a plant dies if it is starved of nourishment, so will the faith of a muslim if they fail to nourish it with the practical obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

The final part of verse 34 indicates the hidden corrupt intention of the Devil, as it describes his disbelief in the past tense, as if he was always a disbeliever, as a result of his hidden corrupt intention and negative traits, such as pride and envy. As discussed earlier, one must therefore ensure that they correct their intention at all times so that they only act and speak for the sake of pleasing Allah, the Exalted, and they must ensure they act and speak in the correct way by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they adopt the correct intention, actions, speech and positive characteristics, such as patience and gratitude, which will benefit them in both worlds. This will keep them far from the path of the Devil and close to the path of their ancestor, the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him.

Chapter 2 - Al Baqarah, Verses 35-39

وَقُلْنَا يَٰٓـَٔادَمُ ٱسْكُنْ أَنتَ وَزَوْجُكَ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَٰذِهِ ٱلشَّجَرَةَ
فَتَكُونَا مِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

فَأَزَلَّهُمَا ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا ٱهْبِطُوا۟ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِى
ٱلْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَٰعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

فَتَلَقَّىٰٓ ءَادَمُ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ كَلِمَٰتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

قُلْنَا ٱهْبِطُوا۟ مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُم مِّنِّى هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ هُدَاىَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَكَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَآ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."

But Satan caused them to slip out of it [Paradise] and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been. And We said, "Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time."

Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.

We said, "Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.

And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those will be companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.""

These verses make it clear that the original and permanent home of mankind is Paradise. This indicates that one's life on this Earth is part of a journey and not a permanent destination. One should therefore act on the advice given in the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6416. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised one to live in this world as if they were on a journey or a stranger in a foreign land. This is achieved when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they pass through this world and reach their original and permanent home in peace and security. They must never treat this world as their permanent home thereby striving to beautify it unnecessarily. Just like the person on holiday suffices themself with the basic necessities during their journey, one should behave in this manner in this world. This will ensure they return to their permanent and original home where they will be free to fulfill their desires. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 35:

"And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will…""

In addition, one should adopt the correct companionship in this world, such as the correct spouse, so that they are aided in reaching their permanent and original home safely. As indicated by a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5534, a person is always influenced by their companions, whether it is negative or positive, subtle or obvious. In respect to marriage, one must choose a spouse based on the teachings of Islam so that their spouse aids them in reaching their permanent and original home safely. One must choose a spouse based on how much they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If they choose a spouse

based on worldly reasons, such as for the sake of wealth, lineage or beauty, then they will obtain nothing but loss from their marriage. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090. This is obvious as the one who does not sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, will not fulfill the rights of their spouse and they will easily wrong them when they are upset. And the one who does not sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, will only invite others to do the same, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 35:

“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."”

One must not waste their time in discussing nor researching what type of tree it was, as this is not relevant for the lessons one needs to learn from this event. Nor will this be asked about on Judgement Day. Generally speaking, it is vital for muslims to always study knowledge which will increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, and research those things which will be questioned about on Judgement Day. If a particular topic or issue does not fall within these categories one should not waste their time questioning or studying them.

In addition, verse 35 indicates that mankind were created so that Allah, the Exalted, can bestow blessings on them. They were not created to suffer in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

"…Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship…"

But in order to achieve these blessings one must acknowledge and sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Failing to behave in this manner will cause one to behave like an animal and therefore the distinction of mankind over the rest of creation is lost. This only leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds.

Furthermore, it is important to understand that the wisdom behind the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, is to protect a person from harming themself and others, just like the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was commanded to refrain from eating from a specific tree, as the consequences would harm him, not Allah, the Exalted. Only the things which are physically, socially and psychologically harmful to people have been prohibited by Allah, the Exalted. Whether one recognizes these harms or not is in reality, irreverent. Understanding this truth through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge will aid a Muslim in refraining from the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, with a positive mind-set instead of observing them as a burden. This positive thinking will also increase one's ability to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. All the things which are lawful in Islam are either beneficial or they cause no harm to people. So a Muslim is free to enjoy these things

as long as they do not distract them from their responsibilities and duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and the creation, which is harmful and therefore prohibited. This makes it clear that Islam is a straight forward and easy religion. This, in fact, is the most loved aspect of religion to Allah, the Exalted, according to a Hadith found in Imam Bukhari's, Adab Al Mufrad, number 287.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 35:

“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers."”

In addition, even though the prohibition only involved eating from the tree yet Allah, the Exalted, warned them not to approach it. This is a vital concept to understand. Approaching the tree was lawful, only eating from it was not. This indicates that just because something is lawful it does not mean one should do it. There are plenty of things which are lawful but doing them can lead to trouble. For example, over eating is not sinful, yet it leads to many psychological and physical problems. In addition, the first step to sins are often permissible and vain things. For example, sinful speech, such as lying, backbiting and slandering, often begins with permissible and vain speech. If one reflects on those who have adopted a misguided lifestyle, they will realize that in most cases their misguidance was not in one go. It involved many lawful steps which eventually led to a sinful way of life. A good example of this is how the youth get involved in gang crimes. Therefore, one must strive to get involved in those things which will directly benefit them in both worlds and the things which are directly connected to their necessities and

responsibilities and avoid the things which are not, even if they are lawful. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451, that a muslim cannot become pious until they leave lawful things out of fear it may take them to unlawful things.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 35:

“And We said, "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat therefrom in [ease and] abundance from wherever you will. But do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers." But Satan caused them to slip out of it [Paradise] and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been…”

As the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, was created to represent Allah, the Exalted, on Earth, he was put to the test whereby he was prohibited to eat from a tree and the Devil was allowed to work his scheme against the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 30:

“And, when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority."…”

The Devil pretended to be a sincere friend and adviser to the Holy Prophet Adam and his wife, peace be upon them, and he therefore managed to trick them into eating from the forbidden tree. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 19-22:

"And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from wherever you will but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers." But Satan whispered to them to make apparent to them that which was concealed from them of their private parts. He said, "Your Lord did not forbid you this tree except that you become angels or become of the immortal." And he swore [by Allāh] to them, "Indeed, I am to you from among the sincere advisors." So he made them fall, through deception…"

As mentioned earlier, this indicates the importance of avoiding bad companions as they will negatively affect their companions, even if it is unintentional. One must ensure they accompany those who strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, so that they are influenced in a positive way. One must be careful with their companions, such as their relatives, as they can often unintentionally advise them to do things which will cause them to slip out of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This is why it is vital for muslims to learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they not only adopt good companions but also protect themselves from the negative influence of their loved ones, such as their relatives.

The other thing to note is that the Devil has made it clear that he is the ultimate enemy of mankind and therefore one must treat him like an enemy. This is only possible when one learns and acts on the Holy Quran and the

traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as these will teach them how to recognize the tricks of their sworn enemy and overcome them so that they remain within the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. The one who fails to do this will eventually obey the Devil and as a result he will cause them to slip out of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds, just like he caused the parents of mankind to slip out of Paradise through his deception.

The mission of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, as the representative of Allah, the Exalted, on Earth then began. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 36:

"*But Satan caused them to slip out of it [Paradise] and removed them from that [condition] in which they had been. And We said, "Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another…""*

The plural, which indicates more than two, is used for the command of going down to the Earth and being enemies to one another. This command therefor refers to the Holy Prophet Adam, his wife, peace be upon them, and the Devil. This therefore indicates that not only is the Devil an open and clear enemy of mankind but people can also become enemies to one another. As discussed earlier, this indicates the importance of adopting good companionship, as one is influenced by their companions, negatively or positively. As long as one sets the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as their number one priority, then they will be protected from the negative influence of people and the Devil. This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the

Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

The test of mankind on Earth is then outlined. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 36:

“…And We said, "Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time."”

The test of mankind on Earth is whether they use the provision they have been granted, in the form of worldly blessings, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, or not. The one who uses them correctly will find peace of mind during their short stay in this world and peace of mind in the hereafter. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who misuses the provision they have been granted will encounter a stressful life during their short stay in this world and difficulties in the hereafter. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, verse 36 indicates that the provision a person needs to survive in this world is already settled and allocated. In fact, a person's lawful provision was allocated over 50,000 years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, one must never let the fear of not obtaining their provision drive them towards the unlawful. This only leads to destruction in both worlds, as the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilizing what is lawful. If one's foundation is corrupt then everything they build on top of it will be corrupt.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 36:

"…And We said, "Go down, [all of you], as enemies to one another, and you will have upon the earth a place of settlement and provision for a time.""

As one’s settlement in this world is temporary, they must not delay in striving to pass the test of being in this world. Irrespective of how a person behaves, as their settlement in this world is temporary, they will return to Allah, the Exalted, to face the consequences of passing or failing their test on Earth. As this return is inevitable, it makes sense to prioritize preparing for one’s final judgement by passing the test of this world over all other things and activities.

Unlike the Devil, who refused to see and admit the error of his disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, accepted responsibility for his error and was therefore inspired to sincerely repent to Allah, the Exalted. As a result, Allah, the Exalted, accepted his repentance and established this tradition for anyone who wishes to return to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 37:

“Then Adam received from his Lord [some] words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.”

And chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 23:

“They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers."”

Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone else who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, sincerely promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

It is importance to note that one must not confuse wishful thinking with hoping in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Hope in Allah, the Exalted, is always tied to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, one will strive to mend their ways and remain steadfast on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, wishful thinking involves persisting in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Wishful thinking has no value in Islam. This distinction has been made clear in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. In fact, this difference is indicated in the next verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 38:

“We said, "Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Allah, the Exalted, made it clear that part of sincere repentance is striving to improve one’s obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and remain firm on it. The final form of this guidance has come in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is important to note that the verse does not mention belief in divine

guidance but mentions practically following it. This means verbally declaring belief is not good enough to achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds until it is supported by practical obedience. This is why many muslims fail to obtain the peace of mind mentioned in this verse. One must learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Only through this practical obedience will one obtain protection from fear and grief in both worlds.

It is important to note that this verse does not mean one will not face difficulties, as facing difficulties is a part of the test of this world. It means that even though one may experience times of anxiety, stress and sadness yet these feelings will never be extreme, such as fear and grief. This will ensure one overcomes these negative feelings and maintains their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, during all situations. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to practically follow divine guidance will face extreme emotions and negative feelings, such as fear and grief, which will overcome them throughout their lives. As a result, they will live with an imbalanced mental and physical state. This only leads to further stress, anxiety and trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Allah, the Exalted, created and controls the spiritual heart of a person, which is the abode of peace of mind. Therefore, if one sincerely obeys Him, He will grant them peace of mind, even if they face regular difficulties. Whereas, the one who disobeys Him will obtain nothing but stress, anxiety and depression, even if they have the world at their feet. This truth is obvious to the one who observes the rich and famous. Therefore, as indicated by verse 38, peace of mind has nothing to do with worldly things, such as fame, fortune, authority, family, career or friends. Peace of mind is directly connected to accepting and practically following divine guidance so that one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

To conclude, one must not be fooled into believing that divine guidance will prevent them from obtaining a happy life. Divine guidance ensures one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Whereas, ignoring divine guidance will cause one to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds. Divine guidance is similar to a medical

doctor who prescribes bitter medicine and dietary restrictions on a patient so that they achieve good mental and physical health. Just like ignoring the medical doctor will only lead to a poor mental and physical state, so will ignoring divine guidance.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 38:

“We said, "Go down from it, all of you. And when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Generally speaking, this verse also makes it clear that an individual or a society cannot protect themselves from fear or grief without actualizing faith. This is because a good law within a society will only prevent people from wronging others and committing crimes when they believe they cannot escape the authority. But whenever one believes they can escape the authority then they will commit crimes and wrong others. This will prevent the society from achieving peace and justice. Instead, as indicated by this verse, the society will live in fear and grief. This is only avoidable when one actualizes faith, as this leads to the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and the fear of the consequences of their actions. It is this fear which prevents one from wronging others and committing crimes even when they believe they will escape the worldly authority, such as the police. This truth is obvious when one turns the pages of history and observes the societies which implemented and actualized their faith in Allah, the Exalted, through practical obedience.

In addition, this verse makes it clear that one will only gain protection from extreme emotions, such as grief and fear, and obtain a peaceful life when they strictly follow divine guidance. This means one must avoid innovations in religion and instead dedicate themself to learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoid other things, even if they are considered good deeds. The simple truth is that the more one acts on other good deeds the less they will act on these two sources of guidance. This will prevent them from obtaining protection from fear and grief.

Depending on the level of one's lack of practically following divine guidance, they may well leave this world without faith. This can occur as faith is like a plant which must be nourished with practical acts of obedience. Just like a plant which is starved of nourishment may well die, so can the faith of a person who fails to practically follow divine guidance. This has been warned in the next verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 39:

"And those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those will be companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally."

One must therefore ensure they support their verbal declaration of faith with practical acts of obedience in order to avoid this outcome. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is vital to

understand that one can accept Islam verbally while denying it practically. This must be avoided as protection from fear and grief in both worlds is only granted to those who practically follow divine guidance. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 38:

"…whoever follows My guidance - there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve."

Even though residing in Hell is harsh and severe, yet it is a fitting punishment for the one who denies Allah, the Exalted, their God, Creator, Master, Sustainer and Nourisher. The One who continuously bestows them with countless blessings. The same way an invention which fails to fulfil its purpose of creation is discarded, so will the invention named human be discarded on the Day of Judgement if they fail to fulfil their purpose of creation, which is to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me."

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, has decided this outcome for those who disbelieve in Him and this decision cannot be averted nor stopped, one must either obey His law or find a universe where His law does not apply. As the latter is not possible, one must therefore seek Islamic

knowledge with an open mind so that its truthfulness and benefits in both worlds becomes apparent to them.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 40-46

يَٰبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱذۡكُرُواْ نِعۡمَتِيَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنۡعَمۡتُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَأَوۡفُواْ بِعَهۡدِيٓ أُوفِ بِعَهۡدِكُمۡ وَإِيَّٰيَ فَٱرۡهَبُونِ ﴿٤٠﴾

وَءَامِنُواْ بِمَآ أَنزَلۡتُ مُصَدِّقٗا لِّمَا مَعَكُمۡ وَلَا تَكُونُوٓاْ أَوَّلَ كَافِرِۭ بِهِۦۖ وَلَا تَشۡتَرُواْ بِـَٔايَٰتِي ثَمَنٗا قَلِيلٗا وَإِيَّٰيَ فَٱتَّقُونِ ﴿٤١﴾

وَلَا تَلۡبِسُواْ ٱلۡحَقَّ بِٱلۡبَٰطِلِ وَتَكۡتُمُواْ ٱلۡحَقَّ وَأَنتُمۡ تَعۡلَمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

وَأَقِيمُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُواْ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَٱرۡكَعُواْ مَعَ ٱلرَّٰكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

۞ أَتَأۡمُرُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ بِٱلۡبِرِّ وَتَنسَوۡنَ أَنفُسَكُمۡ وَأَنتُمۡ تَتۡلُونَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَۚ أَفَلَا تَعۡقِلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

وَٱسۡتَعِينُواْ بِٱلصَّبۡرِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِۚ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلۡخَٰشِعِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

ٱلَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلَٰقُواْ رَبِّهِمۡ وَأَنَّهُمۡ إِلَيۡهِ رَٰجِعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

“O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me], and be afraid of [only] Me.

And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you [people of the book], and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price, and fear [only] Me.

And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].

And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].

Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?

And seek help through patience and prayer; and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah].

Who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him.”

Allah, the Exalted, directly addresses the people of the book, the Jews and Christians, living in Medina during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, calling them towards accepting the truth of Islam, which they clearly recognised as both the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran were discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 40-41:

"O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me], and be afraid of [only] Me. And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you [people of the book], and be not the first to

disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price, and fear [only] Me."

In fact, the people of the book only resided in Medina as they were aware that the last Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, would migrate there. For example, a Jewish scholar named Yusha resided in Medina and used to advise others about the coming of the last Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and encouraged the people of Medina to accept him when he arrived. But when he did, Yusha and most of his fellow scholars, rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, out of envy and fear of losing the wealth and social status they had obtained through manipulating their divine scriptures. This has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 212.

They envied the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he was the descendant of the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, instead of being a descendant of his brother, the Holy Prophet Ishaaq, peace be upon him, like they were. This love for brotherhood and blood encouraged them to reject the truth when it was made clear to them. They behaved arrogantly towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, just like the Devil behaved arrogantly towards the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. This is one of the reasons the people of the book are addressed straight after the story of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and the Devil are discussed. In addition, they were hoping the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessing be upon him, would praise them, assign them positions of authority, and overlook their evil behaviour of using their faith in order to gain wealth and social status. When they were challenged by Islam and invited towards learning and acting on

the truth, they feared losing the wealth and social status they had obtained and as a result they rejected Islam.

Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, reminds them of the countless blessings He bestowed on them, such as divine guidance through Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, as well as divine scriptures, such as the Torah and the Bible, and encouraged them to fulfil the promise of sincerely obeying Him and accepting the truth whenever it came to them, specifically, the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the final divine revelation, the Holy Quran. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 155-157:

"And Moses chose from his people seventy men for Our appointment. And when the earthquake seized them, he said, "My Lord, if You had willed, You could have destroyed them before and me [as well]. Would You destroy us for what the foolish among us have done? This is not but Your trial by which You send astray whom You will and guide whom You will. You are our Protector, so forgive us and have mercy upon us; and You are the best of forgivers. And decree for us in this world [that which is] good and [also] in the Hereafter; indeed, we have turned back to You." [Allāh] said, "My punishment - I afflict with it whom I will, but My mercy encompasses all things." So I will decree it [especially] for those who fear Me and give zakāh and those who believe in Our verses. Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written [i.e., described] in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and prohibits them from what is wrong and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him - it is those who will be the successful."

Allah, the Exalted, encouraged them to fulfil their covenant of sincere obedience and not fear people when accepting Islam nor fear losing out on worldly things, such as wealth and authority. If they did so, He would grant them peace of mind and success in both worlds in return. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

“O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me], and be afraid of [only] Me.”

And chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 66:

“And if only they had upheld [the law of] the Torah, the Gospel, and what has been revealed to them from their Lord [the Quran], they would have consumed [provision] from above them and from beneath their feet…”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

“O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me], and be afraid of [only] Me.”

One of the greatest blessings Allah, the Exalted, granted the people of the book was that He appointed them as His representatives on Earth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 122:

“O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds.”

But as they failed to represent Him correctly, which involves sincerely obeying Him in all aspects of one’s life, this honour was taken from them and granted to the muslim nation. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh…”

But as clearly indicated in this verse, the muslim nation will only fulfil their role as the representatives of Allah, the Exalted, when they sincerely obey Him, which involves using the blessings He has granted them in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Just like the people of the book earned the anger of Allah, the Exalted, when they failed to fulfil their role, so will the muslims if they fail to represent Allah, the Exalted, correctly.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

“O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me], and be afraid of [only] Me.”

Generally speaking, this reminds muslims to always remember the countless and continuous favors of Allah, the Exalted, during both times of difficulty and ease, so that they maintain their obedience to Him, by showing patience in times of difficulties and gratitude in times of ease. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one’s speech or actions and remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by fulfilling His commands and refraining from His prohibitions according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Gratitude involves using the blessings one has been granted, such as their tongue and wealth, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One must fulfil the covenant taken when they willingly accepted Islam as their faith, namely, the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, during all situations. This includes fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and the rights of people as outlined in Islamic teachings. The latter is best achieved when one simply treats others how they wish people to treat them. Verse 40, reminds muslims not to compromise on their covenant with Allah, the Exalted, out of fear of people and their criticism or out of fear of losing out on fulfilling their worldly desires, such as obtaining wealth and authority. In return, Allah, the Exalted, would fulfil His promise of granting them peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if one fails to fulfil their covenant and instead compromises on their faith for the sake of worldly things and people, then Allah, the Exalted, will not fulfil His promise of granting them peace of mind in both worlds and instead the very things they obtained through compromising on their faith will become a source of stress and difficulties for them in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you,

and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

This is an inescapable consequence as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls one's spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, and therefore He alone decides whether one obtains peace of mind or not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

"And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep."

To sum up, fear of Allah, the Exalted, involves maintaining one's sincere obedience under all circumstances, by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoiding compromising on this for the sake of worldly gain.

The Holy Quran confirmed the unaltered aspects of the past divine revelations, the Torah and the Bible, and corrected those aspects which were altered by people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 41:

"And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you…"

Therefore, the knowledgeable from the people of the book had no excuses to reject the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Unlike the idol worshippers of Mecca who were uneducated, the people of the book were fully aware of the miraculous nature of divine revelation and the signs of the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the majority of the people of the book from Medina rejected Islam, out of fear of losing the wealth and social status they had obtained through intentionally misinterpreting their divine scriptures. They therefore angered Allah, the Exalted, in a way no other community at that time did, not even the uneducated idol worshippers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 89-90:

"And when there came to them a Book [the Quran] from Allāh confirming that which was with them - although before they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved - but [then] when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it; so the curse of Allāh will be upon the disbelievers. How wretched is that for which they sold themselves - that they would disbelieve in what Allāh has revealed through [their] outrage that Allāh would send down His favor upon whom He wills from among His servants. So they returned having [earned] wrath upon wrath…"

They exchanged the divine knowledge and guidance they were granted which clearly indicated the truthfulness of Islam for worldly gain, even though they were warned not to. They should have been the first to believe in Islam ahead of all others yet many of them rushed into disbelieving in it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 41:

“And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you, and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price, and fear [only] Me.”

What made matters worse is that when the scholars from the people of the book disbelieved in Islam, despite recognizing its truthfulness, they caused many ignorant people to disbelieve in Islam out of blind imitation. As warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674, a person will increase their sins when they advise others to commit sins, even if they do not commit the sin themself. This was another reason why they earned the anger of Allah, the Exalted. Generally speaking, a person must avoid blindly imitating others like cattle and instead use the intellect they have been granted in order to research and accept the truth in worldly and religious matters. Blind imitation is disliked in Islam as each person must accept and act on it with understanding and insight. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

"Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me...""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 41:

“And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you, and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price, and fear [only] Me.”

This verse also indicates that when one submits to Allah, the Exalted, and strives to sincerely obey Him, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, they will be criticized by others who dislike living by a higher code of conduct and instead only want to fulfill their desires, whether lawful or unlawful. In fact, the majority of criticism comes from one’s own relatives, even though they should be the first to support them in their journey towards obeying Allah, the Exalted. This is an inevitable outcome and something muslims must accept. They should overcome this criticism and pressure by fearing Allah, the Exalted, and their final judgement. One must remember that people and worldly things will not protect them from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, whereas Allah, the Exalted, will protect them from the criticism of people by granting them peace of mind, even if this protection is not obvious to them. This will ensure they remain firm on His obedience.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 41:

“And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you, and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price, and fear [only] Me.”

The people of the book arrogantly persisted in intentionally misinterpreting and concealing the parts of divine knowledge they were granted which blocked them from fulfilling their desires. They would take bribes in order to give favorable rulings to the rich and influential, even if it meant intentionally challenging divine law and guidance. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 42:

“And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].”

Generally speaking, a person can mix the truth with falsehood by adopting practices not based on Islamic teachings in order to fit in better with the rest of society. A muslim must remember that the more they act on non-Islamic practices, even if they are not sinful, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will only lead to misguidance. In addition, one can conceal the truth, when they pick and choose which aspects of Islam to act upon and which to ignore. This person treats Islam like a coat which they take on and off as they see fit. The one who behaves in this manner may appear to be acting on Islamic teachings yet they follow and worship nothing but their desires. Their attitude will only cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which leads to stress in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you,

and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 42:

“And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it].”

The people of the book were granted many opportunities to reform their corrupt ways and to sincerely submit to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They were invited to uphold the pillars of faith: establishing the obligatory prayers and donating charity, in the same manner as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“And establish prayer and give zakāh and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

Establishing the prayer involves fulfilling them with all their conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. As advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616, the central pillar of Islam is establishing the

obligatory prayers. This is because the five daily obligatory prayers are the regular connection one has with Allah, the Exalted. They are a powerful reminder of the Day of Judgement. Just like one stands in front of Allah, the Exalted, five times a day, they will stand in front of Him on Judgement Day and answer for their deeds. The one who establishes them correctly will therefore be reminded of Judgement Day to the extend they are encouraged to practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But the one who fails to establish their obligatory prayers will easily forget their accountability on Judgement Day. As a result, they will not bother preparing for it and instead misuse the blessings they have been granted. This person will fail to actualize their faith and if they persist on this attitude, their faith may well die as it does not obtain the nourishment it requires to survive. Just like a plant dies without nourishment so can one's faith when it is not nourished with practical acts of obedience. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618 that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers.

Offering the obligatory charity represents all aspects of financial responsibilities due on a person, such as financially supporting one's dependents. It is the practical proof of one's love and prioritizing obeying Allah, the Exalted, over enjoying the worldly things they possess, such as wealth. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

"Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love…"

Obligatory charity aims to purge the excess love of worldly things from one's spiritual heart so that they can concentrate on sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who is greedy will not be able to behave in this manner. As a result they will become far from Allah, the Exalted, far from people, far from Paradise and close to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1961. In addition, offering the obligatory charity is a means to fulfilling one's sincerity to others, which is a vital part of Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

"And establish prayer and give zakāh and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience]."

Bowing with those who bow specifically indicates the importance of the congregational prayer. This is one of the most important traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in respect to acts of worship and must therefore be adopted according to one's strength and opportunity. It is sufficient to know that the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would consider the one who did not attend the congregational prayers without a valid reason a hypocrite. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 550. It is an

excellent way of moulding one’s life around Islam as the one who prays with congregation at a Mosque is forced to arrange their activities according to the prayer times. This helps one to focus on their purpose on this Earth, to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, bowing with those who bow, also indicates the importance of submitting to Allah, the Exalted, according to method employed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. One must adhere strictly to learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoid other things, even if they are considered good deeds, as the more one acts on other things the less they will learn and act on the two sources of guidance. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has therefore warned that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606.

Bowing with those who bow also indicates the importance of good companionship. Meaning, one must accompany those who have practically submitted to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. A person will always be influenced by their companions, whether negatively or positively, subtly or apparently. Those who accompany people who persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will find that they too become bolder in disobeying Allah, the Exalted. But those who accompany those who

sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, will find that they are encouraged to obey Him also. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 119:

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and be with those who are true.”

And chapter 25 Al Furqan, verses 27-28:

“And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, "Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way. Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken that one as a friend.””

And chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 43:

“And establish prayer and give zakāh and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].”

Bowing with those who bow also indicates the importance of supporting others in things which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and avoiding supporting others in disobeying Allah, the Exalted. One must never base their decision to support others or not to support them on their relationship with them, as this often leads to sins. Instead, one must observe what someone is doing and support them if the activity is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who the person is. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 2:

“…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 44:

“Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?”

Advising others to do good and warning them against evil according to the manners and etiquettes taught by Islam is a duty on all muslims. In fact, it is the characteristic which gives the muslim nation its superiority. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh…"

It is important to note that one of the conditions of advising good and warning against evil is that one admonishes themself first and strives to implement their advice in their own character. The one who persistently and intentionally ignores their own advice and yet advises others has been warned of Hell in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3267. One does not need to obtain perfection before advising others, as this is not possible nor expected but they must strive to implement their knowledge before passing it on to others. In addition, it is important to note that the one being advised should always accept and act on good advice even if the advisor appears to be behaving hypocritically. Their hypocrisy is between them and Allah, the Exalted, and therefore the one being advised should accept and act on their advice as long as it runs in line with the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

One must remember that possessing knowledge is not useful until it is acted on. Acting on knowledge is what makes it useful otherwise it is useless. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

“…and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]…”

One must therefore strive to not only gain useful worldly and religious knowledge but strive to implement it correctly so that they benefit themself and others in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 44:

“Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?”

This verse also warns against showing off. One can behave in this manner when they advise others towards acts of righteousness in order to appear righteous themself, even though they neglect doing the righteous actions themself. The foundation of one’s faith is their intention. If their intention is corrupt, meaning, they do not act in order to please Allah, the Exalted, then all their actions will become corrupt. In fact, the insincere person will be told on Judgement Day to obtain the reward for their good deeds from the people they acted for, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. One must therefore ensure they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A sign of one’s sincerity is that they do not expect nor hope for any gratitude or payback from people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 44:

“Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason?”

This verse also makes it clear that simply reciting divine scripture without practically acting on it is not good enough to achieve success in both worlds. Allah, the Exalted, confirmed that the people of the book recite the previous divine scripture yet criticized them as they failed to act on it. Muslims must avoid treating the Holy Quran as a book of recitation by failing to understand and implement it in their lives. Instead, they must treat it as a book of guidance by learning and acting on it. Just like a map will not benefit the one who simply studies it without acting on its directions neither will the person who only recites the Holy Quran without striving to understand and act on it. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Specifically, this verse also criticized some of the scholars from the people of the book living in Medina who advised others, such as their loved ones, to accept Islam and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet rejected Islam themself out of fear of losing the worldly things they had obtained, such as wealth and authority, through compromising on their divine scriptures. It also criticizes those who would advise others of the coming of the last Holy Prophet, peace and blessings

be upon him, to Medina and the importance of accepting and following him, yet they rejected him when he finally came to them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 45:

"And seek help through patience…"

The purpose of this world is to test mankind whether they will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, or not. Fulfilling one's purpose and passing this test is only possible when one adopts patience in obeying Allah, the Exalted. Patience is required to control one's desires so that they do not misuse the blessings they have been granted. It is required to face the difficulties of this world so that one avoids complaining through their words or actions and instead remains firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times. One must always remember that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses what is best for them, even if the wisdoms behind His choices are not obvious to them. As long as they remain obedient in both times of difficulties and ease, they will succeed in every aspect of their life and in the next world also. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

One must always compare their difficulties to harder difficulties faced by others in order to aid them adopt patience. One must remember that no matter what difficulty they face it could have always been worse and people who were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, faced more and harsher difficulties than them. They must demonstrate patience from the very onset of a difficulty until they leave this world, as one can lose the reward of patience by showing impatience down the line. Accepting a difficulty after some time is not patience, it is merely acceptance. Real patience is shown from the very onset of a difficulty. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302. Facing difficulties is inevitable and it is impossible to avoid facing a difficulty which Allah, the Exalted, has willed for a person to face. Therefore, showing impatience does not make sense as one will face their destined difficulty and lose the reward they could have gained through patience.

The one who adopts patience in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, will find it easier to establish their prayers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 45:

“And seek help through patience and prayer…”

As mentioned earlier, establishing the prayers helps one to remember the Day of Judgement and answering for their actions. The same way one stands in front of Allah, the Exalted, during the prayer, they will stand in front of Him on Judgement Day also. The one who prays in this fashion will always lead a humble life, as they do not know the outcome of their final judgement, and

they will find it easier to face difficulties and maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who does not establish their prayers nor adopts patience does so as they are not convinced they will answer for their actions on Judgement Day, otherwise they would practically prepare for it by establishing their prayers and adopting patience in all situations. Perhaps this is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 45-46:

"And seek help through patience and prayer; and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allāh]. Who are certain that they will meet their Lord and that they will return to Him."

The one who truly believes in the Day of Judgement will practically prepare for it. An aspect of this is accepting and acting on divine knowledge when it is presented to them, even if it contradicts their desires. The one who is proud will not be able to do this, only the one who adopts humility will. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Therefore, the one who ignores acting on divine knowledge does not truly believe in the Day of Judgement, even if they verbally claim otherwise.

Certainty of faith is obtained when one learns and acts on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be

upon him. The stronger one's faith, the more they will humbly obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as they are convinced they will answer for their actions on the Day of Judgement. They will understand through the signs in Islamic teachings as well as the signs in the universe which clearly indicate that everything that has a beginning, has an end, such as the passing of the days and nights. They will pay attention to the constant indications around them proving and reminding them of the Day of Resurrection, such as the barren dead land which springs to life after it receives water from the Heavens and the life and death cycle of the days and nights, the death and life of trees and plants and how a person experiences a minor resurrection every day when they go to sleep and then wake up again. Certainty of faith constantly reminds one of the Day of Judgement in this way so that they are encouraged to practically prepare for it by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. The one who does this will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 40:

"O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me], and be afraid of [only] Me."

To conclude, Muslims must learn from the actions of the past nations in order to avoid history repeating itself. They must prove their belief in the Holy Quran through actions by learning and acting on it so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. They must avoid believing in it verbally while disbelieving in it practically, just like the past nations did in respect to their divine scriptures. Failing to practically implement it will only cause one to compromise on its teachings for the sake of worldly gain. In order to avoid this outcome one must always fear Allah, the Exalted, and the consequences of their actions in both worlds. One must not be fooled into believing just because they have not been punished immediately for their failure to practically implement their faith does not mean they will never be punished. Punishment being delayed is not the same as no punishment. In addition, the one who fails to practically act on the Holy Quran and instead compromises on its teachings will be punished in subtle ways. The very things they obtain through compromising on their faith will become a source of stress for them. So the more worldly things they gain, such as wealth, the more their stress and difficulties will increase in every aspect of their life so that they lead a dark and constricted life despite having the world at their feet. But the punishment that follows this is even more intense. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 47-48

يَٰبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱذۡكُرُواْ نِعۡمَتِيَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنۡعَمۡتُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلۡتُكُمۡ عَلَى ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

وَٱتَّقُواْ يَوۡمٗا لَّا تَجۡزِي نَفۡسٌ عَن نَّفۡسٖ شَيۡـٔٗا وَلَا يُقۡبَلُ مِنۡهَا شَفَٰعَةٞ وَلَا يُؤۡخَذُ مِنۡهَا عَدۡلٞ وَلَا هُمۡ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

"O Children of Israel, remember My favor that I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds [peoples].

And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided."

Allah, the Exalted, encourages the people of the book living in Medina to show gratitude for the countless blessings He granted them, such as sending numerous Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, to their ancestors, by accepting Islam, especially when its truthfulness was made clear to them in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

One of the greatest blessings Allah, the Exalted, granted them was their appointment as His representatives on Earth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 47:

"O Children of Israel, remember My favor that I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds [peoples]."

Allah, the Exalted, reminded them of their ancestor, the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, who was also called Israel. Just like the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, fulfilled his role as the representative of Allah, the Exalted, the people of the book, his offspring, also needed to fulfil their roles and duties. An aspect of this role was to accept Islam and the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they encountered him and the divine scripture he would be granted, the Holy Quran. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 155-157:

"And Moses chose from his people seventy men for Our appointment. And when the earthquake seized them, he said, "My Lord, if You had willed, You could have destroyed them before and me [as well]. Would You destroy us for what the foolish among us have done? This is not but Your trial by which You send astray whom You will and guide whom You will. You are our Protector, so forgive us and have mercy upon us; and You are the best of forgivers. And decree for us in this world [that which is] good and [also] in the Hereafter; indeed, we have turned back to You." [Allāh] said, "My punishment - I afflict with it whom I will, but My mercy encompasses all things." So I will decree it [especially] for those who fear Me and give zakāh and those who believe in Our verses. Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written [i.e., described] in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and prohibits them from what is wrong and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him - it is those who will be the successful."

But out of fear of losing out on the worldly things they obtained, such as wealth and authority, through compromising on their divine scriptures, they rejected Islam. For example, in the ninth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, a delegation visited the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This Christian delegation did not accept Islam but agreed to a peace treaty with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. While leaving Medina, two members of this delegation, Abu Haritha and Kurz Bin Alqama, were riding near each other. The mule of Abu Haritha stumbled and out of frustration Kurz criticized the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, indirectly. In response, Abu Haritha criticized him. When Kurz questioned his response, Abu Haritha told him that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was undoubtedly the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, they had been waiting for and who had been discussed in their divine scriptures. When Kurz questioned why he did not accept Islam despite believing this fact, Abu Haritha replied that he did so because of the honor, wealth and authority their people had given them and he was afraid he would lose it all if he accepted Islam. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 4, Pages 75-76.

As the people of the book failed their role as the representatives of Islam, this honor and responsibility was then transferred to the muslim nation. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient."

But as clearly indicated in this verse, the muslim nation will only successfully represent Allah, the Exalted, on Earth when they sincerely obey Him. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will lead to peace of mind for them and ensure they show the true face of Islam to the rest of the world. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if they fail in this duty then they will face the consequences of this in both this world and the next. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Allah, the Exalted, then warns the people of the book, and by extension the muslim nation, that if they fail in their duty of representing Allah, the Exalted, on Earth correctly, then nothing will save them on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 47-48:

“O Children of Israel, remember My favor that I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds [peoples]. And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

The people of the book adopted wishful thinking whereby they believed that they could disobey Allah, the Exalted, and fail in their duty to represent Him correctly on Earth and somehow they would escape punishment on the Day of Judgement. They believed someone, such as the Holy Prophets Musa and Eesa, peace be upon them, will intercede for them thereby saving them from facing the consequences of their actions. They also believed they would simply apologize for their disobedience and Allah, the Exalted, would accept this as compensation and not punish them, as they considered themselves His beloveds and children. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 18:

“But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of Allāh and His beloved." Say, "Then why does He punish you for your sins?" Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills…”

They falsely believed Allah, the Exalted, would simply criticize them, similar to how a father criticizes his children but avoids punishing them out of love for them.

This type of wishful thinking is extremely disrespectful as this person believes Allah, the Exalted, is not just and racist as He would simply ignore the stubborn and persistent disobedience of certain groups of people because of their lineage. They assumed He would treat the evil doer and the doer of good equally in this world and the next. A worldly judge would be harshly criticized and removed from their position if they behaved in this manner, then how can one then attribute this deviant attitude to Allah, the Exalted, the All Just? Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 21:

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.”

Sadly, this wishful thinking has infected many muslims who believe someone will save them on Judgement Day, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, or Allah, the Exalted, will simply forgive them as they are from the nation of His beloved Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, despite the fact they persistently and stubbornly disobey Him. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on Judgement Day is a fact, which has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less, one must not mock it by persistently disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and then expect his intercession to save them.

One must note that despite the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, many disobedient muslims will still go to Hell, even if their stay in it is reduced. The bitter truth is that the one who persistently disobeys Allah, the Exalted, should be fearful that they will not leave this world with their faith, as they failed to nourish the plant of faith with the practical obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as intercession will only be accepted for muslims. In addition, the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, does not change for anyone. The same way Allah, the Exalted, punished the previous nations in this world and has threatened to punish them in the next world for their persistent disobedience to Him, so will the muslims be punished if they adopt their attitude and lifestyle. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 23:

“The established way of Allāh which has occurred before. And never will you find in the way of Allāh any change.”

Claiming love verbally for Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has no value until one proves this by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins….”"

Only when one behaves in this manner will they end up in the hereafter with those they love. This has been advised in a Hadith found in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688. But if one fails to prove their love through actions, they will not end up with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in the hereafter, just like the people of the book will not end up with their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, as they failed to practically follow in their footsteps.

One must understand the difference between true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. True hope is always connected to striving in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and whenever one happens to commit sins, they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour in the future. The one who adopts this attitude has the right to then hope Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them in this world and the next. Whereas, the wishful thinker persistently disobeys Allah, the Exalted, and still expects to be forgiven and granted blessings in both worlds. The latter has no value in Islam. This difference has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

To conclude, one must understand that they will be held responsible for their actions in both this world and in the next. They must not persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and assume someone they have a connection with, such as a relative, spiritual teacher or friend, will save them on Judgement Day. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has already warned that a person’s lineage will not benefit them on Judgement Day if they lack good deeds. This has been

warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853. Chapter 80 Abasa, verses 34-37:

“On the Day a man will flee from his brother. And his mother and his father. And his wife and his children. For every man, that Day, will be a matter adequate for him.”

One must adopt the correct attitude, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and then hope that others will be allowed to benefit them on Judgement Day.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 48:

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

Generally speaking, this verse also warns against adopting the misguided belief that one will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement, despite the fact they led a life of sins and disobedience. The time of connecting with Allah, the Exalted, through His sincere obedience is in this world. The time of answering for one’s actions is the hereafter. One should

not confuse the two as this leads to disobedience and the adopting of false beliefs regarding Allah, the Exalted, and the Day of Judgement. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 35:

“…So that Day they will not be removed from it [Hell], nor will they be asked to appease [Allāh].”

In addition, verse 48 also warns people that they will not be able to blame others for the sins they committed. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 48:

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all…”

Each person is responsible for their own actions and therefore will be judged accordingly. Both the doer of sins and those who invite others towards sins will face the consequences of their disobedience. A person must therefore avoid blindly following others and accompanying those who persistently disobey Allah, the Exalted, as this will only cause them to adopt a similar attitude. One must always observe what they are being invited to and not who is inviting them in order to decide whether they should respond to them or not. If the invitation is towards something which is good, they should respond but if it is towards something which is bad, they must refuse and warn those involved, even if the people inviting them are their relatives and friends. Simply put if one blaming the Devil on Judgement Day for their sins

will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, how can blaming anyone else? Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 22:

“And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, "Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves…"”

And Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 28:

“Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken that one as a friend.”

And Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 48:

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

This verse also warns people not wrong others as an oppressor will not be allowed to compensate their victims on Judgement Day through an apology or by any other worldly means, such as returning their rights to them. They will instead be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victim and if necessary, they will take their victim’s sins until justice is established. This may well cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

One must never be fooled by the fact they are not punished immediately in this world or in an obvious way or by their ability to escape the consequences of their actions through their influence, power and wealth. All these things may work in this world but they will certainly not work on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 48:

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be aided.”

On must therefore practically prepare for the Day of Judgement, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they are granted peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 49-50

وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَٰكُم مِّنْ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوٓءَ ٱلْعَذَابِ يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَآءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ
نِسَآءَكُمْ وَفِى ذَٰلِكُم بَلَآءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ ٱلْبَحْرَ فَأَنجَيْنَٰكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَآ ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

“And [recall] when We saved you [your forefathers] from the people of Pharaoh, who afflicted you with the worst torment, slaughtering your [newborn] sons and keeping your females alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord.

And [recall] when We parted the sea for you and saved you and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you were looking on.”

Allah, the Exalted, continues to mention some of the favors He granted the people of the book, specifically, favors He granted their ancestors. But even though these favors were granted to their ancestors the positive effect of them trickled down to the people of the book living in Medina and the future generations of the children of Israel. If Allah, the Exalted, had not saved them from Pharaoh, the future generations would probably still be subjugated to the Egyptian empire. Allah, the Exalted, mentioned these favors in order to encourage them to accept the truthfulness of Islam, which they clearly recognized, out of gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. If they demonstrated gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, they would have used the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as the divine scriptures they were granted, and as a result they would have certainly accepted Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

Muslims must avoid following the footsteps of the people of the book by failing to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. They must ensure they fulfill

the different levels of gratitude. The first is to ensure they only act to please Allah, the Exalted. The one who acts to please people will be told to gain their reward from them on Judgement Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A clear sign of one's sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, is that they do not expect nor hope for gratitude or payback from people. Next, they must show gratitude through their speech, by speaking good or remaining silent. Finally, they must use all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to further blessings in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 49:

"*And [recall] when We saved you [your forefathers] from the people of Pharaoh, who afflicted you with the worst torment, slaughtering your [newborn] sons and keeping your females alive…"*

To ensure no one challenged his authority and his lifestyle, which was nothing more than fulfilling all his desires, Pharaoh subjugated the children of Israel and forced them into a life of slavery. To prevent their strength from

growing, he would regularly kill the new born boys and allow the women to live in order to serve the Egyptians. Allah, the Exalted, points out a typical attitude of tyrants who fear losing their power. They will resort to harming innocent people, such as children, in order to scare people thereby preventing them from challenging their authority and their evil way. One only needs to turn the pages of history and observe how tyrants behaved in this manner and never adhered to the proper etiquettes of behaviour, even during times of war. Generally speaking, muslims must avoid behaving in this manner in respect to their families whereby they attempt to obtain and hold onto total control over their families through fear. Respect and fear are two very different things. It is important for a muslim to behave in a manner to ensure the people around them, such as their children, respect them but they should not behave in a manner which instills nothing but fear in others. In addition, a person should always avoid wronging others for the sake of worldly gain, such as wealth or authority, as this leads to destruction in both worlds. Even if it appears that a tyrant escaped punishment in this world, justice will be established on Judgement Day, where they will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may well cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One must avoid the desire for authority and pursuing it as it leads to many sins, such as oppressing others in order to obtain and hold onto it. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that the extreme craving for wealth and authority is more destructive to a muslim's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves let loose on a herd of sheep. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376. One must strive to avoid the excess love for wealth and authority and strive for them according to their necessities and responsibilities. If they are tested with a position of authority or wealth, they must use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 49:

“And [recall] when We saved you [your forefathers] from the people of Pharaoh, who afflicted you with the worst torment, slaughtering your [newborn] sons and keeping your females alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord.”

As this world is a place of test and trials, one must not be shocked when they encounter times of difficulties. They must understand and accept that Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for people, even if the wisdoms behind His choices are not obvious. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

A person cannot escape the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, so they must not miss out on the reward of facing them with patience. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one’s actions or speech and remaining sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, muslims must remember the people who have faced greater tests and trials than them as this will diminish the negative effects of the difficulties they face during their lives.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 49:

“And [recall] when We saved you [your forefathers] from the people of Pharaoh, who afflicted you with the worst torment, slaughtering your [newborn] sons and keeping your females alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord.”

The great trial could also be referring to the fact that Allah, the Exalted, saved them from the clutches of Pharoah. Meaning, the great trial in this case would be whether they would show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, or not. This involves using the blessings they have been granted, such as their freedom, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. One must remember that times of ease are often a greater test and trial than times of difficulties. This is because a person facing difficulties is often restricted in their options and has no choice but to wait for relief. Whereas, times of ease means one has many possible options they can pursue which leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is the reason why the wealthy often disobey Allah, the Exalted, more, as they have greater access to things which displease Him, such as drugs and alcohol. Therefore, a muslim must act on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, which advises that a believer will obtain blessings and success in both times of ease and difficulties, as they will respond correctly to each situation. In times of ease they will show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. In times of difficulties, they will remain patient, by avoiding complaining verbally or physically and instead maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, knowing He only chooses what is best for people, even if the wisdoms behind His decrees are not obvious to them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 50:

"*And [recall] when We parted the sea for you…"*

This was one of the many miraculous signs granted to the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, which the people of Israel were shown. They were shown it in order to strengthen their belief in Allah, the Exalted. The sea was parted for them so that they could safely escape Pharoah and his army. Even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was granted many such miracles, such as the splitting of the Moon, which has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7078, none the less, all these miracles were bound by time and only those present could witness them. The greatest miracle granted to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the Holy Quran. Therefore, one must study and act on the Holy Quran so that they can appreciate the countless miracles it possesses, such as the ability to turn abstract things into practical concepts which can be acted upon by any person during any time and place. The more one does this, the stronger their faith will become. The stronger one's faith, the easier it will become for them to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will lead to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 50:

"And [recall] when We parted the sea for you and saved you and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you were looking on."

This event was both a lesson and a warning for the children of Israel and for those who came after them. It clearly indicates that those who remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through times of ease, by showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, and through times of difficulties, by adopting patience, which involves avoiding complaining through one's words and actions and maintaining obedience to Allah, the Exalted, will be granted a way out of all difficulties, even if this seems impossible at the time. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

"…And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out."

Whereas, the one who persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, like Pharaoh and his army did, will face punishment in both worlds, even if the punishment in this world is not apparent to them or seems highly unlikely. Despite his power and influence, nothing could save him from the

punishment of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, one must never be fooled by apparent circumstances and instead firmly believe in the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, which involves saving those who obey Him and punishing those who disobey Him. The people of the book failed to remember this lesson and as a result many of them rejected Islam at the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, despite being convinced of its truthfulness. The people of the book failed to understand that despite the power and influence of Pharaoh, he was destroyed when he challenged the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and if they follow in his footsteps by challenging the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they too would be punished. A muslim must avoid adopting this attitude of opposing Islam even if they verbally claim to believe in it. This can occur when one fails to learn and act on Islamic knowledge which will cause them to misrepresent Islam to others and as a result many people may be put off from accepting and acting on Islam because of them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 50:

“And [recall] when We parted the sea for you and saved you and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you were looking on.”

Generally speaking, one must learn to become observant. They must observe the behaviour of others and the consequences of their behaviour in order to strengthen their resolve to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, knowing that peace of mind and success lies only in this. One must avoid adopting a self-centered and self-absorbed attitude whereby they fail to observe others and learn lessons from their conduct. Observing others will

also encourage one to adopt patience and gratitude when they observe others facing harsher difficulties than them.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 51-52

وَإِذْ وَٰعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰٓ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ ٱتَّخَذْتُمُ ٱلْعِجْلَ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ وَأَنتُمْ ظَٰلِمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

"And [recall] when We made an appointment with Moses for forty nights. Then you took [for worship] the calf after him [his departure], while you were wrongdoers.

Then We forgave you after that so perhaps you would be grateful."

Allah, the Exalted, arranged a private conversation with the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, in order to grant him further knowledge and guidance for him and his nation. The fact that the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, had to prepare for this divine meeting for forty days indicates the importance of gradually improving one's behaviour and conduct towards Allah, the Exalted, and people. Meaning, Allah, the Exalted, does not demand one to become a saint overnight. Rather, He expects people to gradually learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they improve their conduct towards Him and people step by step. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 51:

"And [recall] when We made an appointment with Moses for forty nights…"

This was one of the main reasons why the Holy Quran was revealed in stages instead of in one go. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 32:

"…Thus [it is] that We may strengthen thereby your heart. And We have spaced it distinctly."

Allah, the Exalted, then mentioned how many from the children of Israel began worshipping a golden calf which one of them manufactured after the departure of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, for his meeting with Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 51:

“And [recall] when We made an appointment with Moses for forty nights. Then you took [for worship] the calf after him [his departure]…”

Muslims must avoid behaving in this manner towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by ignoring his teachings now that he has left this world. One must instead show sincerity to him, which is an aspect of Islam according to the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196, by learning and acting on the two sources of guidance he was granted: the Holy Quran and his traditions.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 51:

“And [recall] when We made an appointment with Moses for forty nights. Then you took [for worship] the calf after him [his departure]…”

It is important to note that they fully understood the golden calf was nothing more than a lifeless object which was manufactured in front of their eyes by a human being. It possessed no divine qualities, in fact it possessed no praiseworthy qualities at all, yet they began worshipping it. The truth is that every worshipper of a false deity, whether the deity is an idol, a concept or anything else, such as social media, fashion or culture, only does so as it

allows them to fulfill their desires instead of living by a higher code of conduct which teaches them to control and limit their desires so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. A false deity, such as an idol, will either provide no code of conduct to its worshippers thereby allowing them to fabricate their own one, which caters to their desires. Or the false deity, such as social media, is constructed in a way which encourages people to fulfil their desires. Either way, one is worshipping nothing but their own desires, just like the children of Israel did. The golden calf represented a lifestyle free of any restrictions and allowed them to live a life based on fulfilling their desires without question or restrictions. This reality is indicated in chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 148:

"And the people of Moses made, after [his departure], from their ornaments a calf - an image having a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them to a way? They took it [for worship], and they were wrongdoers."

They clearly understood it could not speak nor guide them to live by a higher code of conduct which restricted their desires but that is exactly what they wanted. They wished to fabricate their own code of conduct which allowed them to fulfil their desires without restraint. This twisted attitude is what made them wrongdoers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 51:

"And [recall] when We made an appointment with Moses for forty nights. Then you took [for worship] the calf after him [i.e., his departure], while you were wrongdoers."

They were also wrongdoers as they had recently physically witnessed the many miracles granted to the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his army. All of these events and signs should have strengthened their faith and therefore their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, yet they abandoned that and worshipped their desires instead.

Muslims must avoid this misguided attitude whereby they verbally accept Islam as their faith yet worship nothing but their desires. This occurs when one willingly and intentionally uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to themself, other people, social media, culture and fashion, instead of using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is the difference between sincerely obeying and worshipping Allah, the Exalted, and worshipping one's desires. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

"Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire…"

One must avoid this attitude by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they strengthen their faith. Strong faith coupled with a good intention to please Allah, the Exalted, will encourage one to sincerely obey Him.

Despite the behaviour of the children of Israel, Allah, the Exalted, still forgave them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 52:

“Then We forgave you after that so perhaps you would be grateful.”

This indicates the infinite mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. One must never lose hope in His forgiveness despite the sins they have committed. But as indicated by the end of verse 52, one must avoid adopting wishful thinking, whereby they continue to disobey Allah, the Exalted, while assuming the infinite mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, will be granted to them. Instead, they must sincerely repent, which involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, they must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people and continue using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. All of this encompasses sincere repentance and showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 51-52:

“And [recall] when We made an appointment with Moses for forty nights. Then you took [for worship] the calf after him [his departure], while you were wrongdoers. Then We forgave you after that so perhaps you would be grateful.”

To conclude, Allah, the Exalted, reminded the people of the book how he forgave their ancestors after they committed polytheism, the very ancestors the people of the book living in Medina used to boast about and attribute perfection to. The people of the book were therefore reminded of the mercy of forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and were therefore encouraged to sincerely repent for rejecting Islam and their harmful attitude towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and to sincerely accept Islam, knowing it was the truth as described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

Yet despite this invitation towards the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, many from the people of the book remained firm on rejecting Islam as the love of fulfilling all their worldly desires that Islam would moderate had overtaken them just like this love had overtaken their ancestors and encouraged them to worship a lifeless object. A muslim must remember that if they behave in the same manner then they will be counted as one of them in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 51:

"O you who have believed, do not take the Jews and the Christians as allies. They are [in fact] allies of one another. And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them. Indeed, Allāh guides not the wrongdoing people."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 53

وَإِذْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ وَٱلْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

"And [recall] when We gave Moses the Scripture and criterion that perhaps you would be guided."

Allah, the Exalted, reminded the people of the book of the great favor He bestowed on their ancestors and by extension, to them also in the form of the Torah. The scripture included the laws and regulations which Allah, the Exalted, chose for the children of Israel. These laws would ensure justice and peace would spread within society when they were implemented correctly. Man made laws will always be biased and favor one group of people over others whereas divine law is free of this and all other possible defects which hinders a society from achieving justice and peace. One only needs to turn the pages of history and observe the societies which implemented divine law correctly and the peace and justice they enjoyed as a consequence. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 53:

“And [recall] when We gave Moses the Scripture and criterion…”

The Torah was also a criterion meaning, when one learned and acted on its teachings they were granted the ability to distinguish between what was beneficial to them and what was harmful, between real success and failure and between the path of peace and the path of anxiety in both worlds.

When both elements were combined, meaning, correctly applying the law and using the teachings of the Torah to differentiate between a life of peace and a life of misery, one would obtain right guidance. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 53:

“And [recall] when We gave Moses the Scripture and criterion that perhaps you would be guided.”

Allah, the Exalted, reminded the people of the book living in Medina the importance of adhering to the correct and unaltered teachings of the Torah that they still possessed. This included recognising and accepting the truthfulness of Islam when they encountered it. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

But the vast majority of the people of the book rejected Islam and failed to uphold the unaltered teachings of the Torah out of love for fulfilling their desires. They knew living by its law and obtaining the criterion would only guide them to using the blessing they had been granted in ways pleasing to

Allah, the Exalted. But as this challenged their desires they changed the law and refused to obtain the criterion.

Muslims must avoid behaving in this manner by ignoring the laws and regulations of the Holy Quran and failing to obtain the criterion one can obtain through learning and acting on it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

“The month of Ramaḍān [is that] in which was revealed the Qur’ān, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion…”

If a society ignores the laws and regulations of the Holy Quran injustice will spread throughout it, as Allah, the Exalted, alone is free from bias and has full knowledge of what is best for a society. If a muslim fails to learn and act on the Holy Quran they will not obtain the criterion and as a result they will not be able to distinguish good from bad, success from failure and the path of peace from the path of anxiety. As a result, they will make choices based on their own desires, the whims of others, social media, fashion and culture which will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This will lead to a dark life in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you,

and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whereas, the society which implements the laws and regulations of the Holy Quran will obtain peace and justice whereby the rights of all people are fulfilled and all forms of misguided social barriers which cause disunity within society would be removed. And the one who learns and acts on the Holy Quran will obtain the ability to distinguish between good and bad, peace and success so that they are guided to using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 53:

"And [recall] when We gave Moses the Scripture and criterion that perhaps you would be guided."

This leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 53:

"And [recall] when We gave Moses the Scripture and criterion that perhaps you would be guided."

Generally speaking, this verse also makes it clear that worldly knowledge is not enough to rightly guide one in this world. Even though some worldly knowledge is useful as it aids one to correctly obtain their lawful provision, none the less, one cannot apply their worldly knowledge to other aspects of their life, such as their personal, social and family aspects of life, and obtain right guidance. No matter how much worldly knowledge one possesses it will not grant them the ability to deduce the laws and regulations society must live by, as their opinions and choices will always be influenced by some sort of bias and due to a lack of complete understanding of society and human nature, they will not be able to choose the best rules and regulations. In addition, one's worldly knowledge will not grant them the criterion which allows them to differentiate between real success and failure and the path of peace from the path of stress. Only the One who knows all things, Allah, the Exalted, and controls the spiritual heart of people, the abode of peace of mind, is aware of this knowledge and it must therefore be sought from Him through the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, verse 53 also makes it clear that right guidance is not possible to achieve without adhering strictly to the divine knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Muslims must therefore avoid all acts and customary

practices not rooted in these two sources of guidance, even if they are considered good deeds. The truth is that the more one acts on other things, even if they are considered good deeds, the less they will learn and act on the two sources of guidance. And as indicated in verse 53, the one who behaves in this manner will not be rightly guided. This is the reason the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 53:

“And [recall] when We gave Moses the Scripture and criterion that perhaps you would be guided.”

This verse also makes it clear that right guidance is only obtained through learning and acting on divine knowledge. Verbally claiming faith in Islam is therefore not good enough to obtain right guidance until it is supported by actions. Just like a map is not useful until it is practically acted on, neither is the divine knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as guidance clearly indicates a practical journey not just a verbal declaration of belief.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 54

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِۦ يَٰقَوْمِ إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنفُسَكُم بِٱتِّخَاذِكُمُ ٱلْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوٓا۟ إِلَىٰ
بَارِئِكُمْ فَٱقْتُلُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِندَ بَارِئِكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ



“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]. So repent to your Maker and kill yourselves [i.e., the guilty among you]. That is best for [all of] you in the sight of your Maker." Then He accepted your repentance; indeed, He is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.”

One can sense the sincerity in the way the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, addressed his people, even though they disobeyed him by taking the golden calf as an object of worship. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 54:

“*And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]…””*

One must adopt this type of sincerity to others as it is an important aspect of Islam, according to the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196. The best way of achieving this is that one must treat others in a way they wish other people to treat them. In fact, a person cannot be a believer until they love for others what they love for themself. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 54:

“*And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]…””*

The children of Israel clearly recognized that the golden calf which was manufactured in front of their eyes by a human being was not worthy of worship. It is what the golden calf represented which enticed them to worship

it. The golden calf being a lifeless object could not have granted them a higher code of conduct to live by which instructed them on how to use the blessings they were granted by Allah, the Exalted. This would allow them to fabricate their own code of conduct, which was tailored so that they could fulfill all their worldly desires while appearing very religious in the eyes of society. This reality applies to every false deity, whether it is an idol, social media, fashion, culture or society. The one who behaves in this manner is only worshipping their desires, like an animal. Chapter 45 A; Jathiyah, verse 23:

“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire…”

This attitude is the primary reason why many non-muslims constantly and unconstructively criticize Islam as it invites people to live by a higher code of conduct which moderates their desires by instructing them on how to use the blessings they have been granted correctly so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. But as these people desire to live like animals without appearing like animals to the rest of society they relentlessly criticize Islam.

Muslims must therefore avoid worshipping their desires by verbally claiming belief in Islam while failing to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They must understand that controlling their worldly desires and using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, is the only way to achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. Just like a doctor moderates and controls the desires of their sick patient by

prescribing bitter medicine and a strict diet plan, Islam does the same. The same way a patient who ignores their doctor’s advice will face mental and physical problems so will the one who fails to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual heart of people, the abode of peace of mind, and He therefore chooses who is granted peace of mind and who is subjected to mental problems. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

Those who ignore the teachings of Islam will enjoy moments of entertainment and fun but overall they will undoubtedly lead a miserable life. The very things they have obtained will only become a source of their stress, anxiety and depression. This is quite evident when one observes the celebrities of this world. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 23 Al Mu’minun, verses 55-56:

“Do they think that what We extend to them of wealth and children. Is [because] We hasten for them good things? Rather, they do not perceive.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

One must reflect on these simple teachings and the people of this world who have ignored the teachings of Islam and the consequences of their choices and remain steadfast on sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 54:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]….”

This verse also warns people that disobeying Allah, the Exalted, only causes harm to oneself, as each person will face the consequences of their disobedience in both worlds. In this world, the very things they obtain through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will become a source of stress and anxiety for them and what comes in the next world will be even more disastrous. This is the reason why those who disobey Allah, the Exalted, lead a miserable life, even if they have the world at their feet and have moments of fun and entertainment. In addition, when one wrongs other people and fails to sincerely repent then they will face stress in this world and on the Day of Judgement they will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Therefore, when one harms others in reality they are only harming themself. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 15:

“Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [the soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 54:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]. So repent to your Maker and kill yourselves [i.e., the guilty among you]. That is best for [all of] you in the sight of your Maker." Then He accepted your repentance…”

Killing yourselves refers to executing those who were guilty of worshipping the golden calf. It was phrased in this manner in order to remind muslims that they are one unit and family even if they come from different countries, speak different languages and lead very different lives. This reminds muslims to show sincerity to one another by treating people how they desire others to treat them. One must wish the best for others just like they desire it for themself. This must be shown through one’s actions not just words.

Even though some of the children of Israel worshipped the golden calf yet all them were put in difficulty. Those who did not worship the golden calf were charged with executing those who did. This indicates the importance of commanding good and forbidding evil within society, as each member of a society is directly or indirectly influenced by the actions of the general masses. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, explained this in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686. He advised that this reality can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels. Those on the lower level desire not to disturb the people of the upper level whenever they wish to obtain water so they decide to drill a hole in the boat

in order to gain access to water directly. If the people of the upper level fail to stop them then all of them will drown. Muslims must therefore fulfill their role in advising others to do good and warning them against evil and only then will they be safe from the negative consequences of society in both worlds. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 164:

"And when a community among them said, "Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allāh is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?" they [the advisors] said, "To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 54:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]. So repent to your Maker and kill yourselves [i.e., the guilty among you]. That is best for [all of] you in the sight of your Maker." Then He accepted your repentance…”

This punishment may seem harsh but it was fitting for them as they had very recently witnessed clear and obvious miracles which were granted to the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, such as his staff turning into a huge snake, and they had recently witnessed the drowning of Pharaoh and his army in a miraculous event. As they physically witnessed these events they therefore had no reason to fall into the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, let

alone the worse of the major sins: polytheism. They should have adopted strong faith through these miracles which would have encouraged them to remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Muslims must avoid this attitude as the greatest and timeless miracles of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, have been granted to them. Through studying and acting on them their faith will strengthen and as a result they will be encouraged to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 54:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf [for worship]. So repent to your Maker and kill yourselves [i.e., the guilty among you]. That is best for [all of] you in the sight of your Maker." Then He accepted your repentance…”

This punishment was the best judgement in the sight of Allah, the Exalted, as those who were executed would obtain the forgiveness of Allah, the

Exalted, and those who remained would be strongly deterred from repeating this behaviour and even from disobeying Allah, the Exalted, in other matters. This would only lead to benefit for everyone involved in both worlds. This reminds one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even when they encounter difficulties. They must firmly believe Allah, the Exalted, always chooses what is best for everyone involved even if the wisdoms behind His choices are not obvious to them. One must learn and act on Islamic teachings in order to strengthen their faith so that they are not deterred from His obedience irrespective of what they encounter. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Allah, the Exalted, was referred to as their Maker as it was a powerful reminder that they should have worshipped and obeyed their Maker, Allah, the Exalted, instead of worshipping an object which one of them manufactured. How can one make an idol with their own hands and then declare it to be their deity? Even if the deity's spirit enters the idol, this would mean that the deity is dependent on people to make it a body. A true deity is not dependent on anyone else and in fact all others are dependent on it.

After the children of Israel fulfilled the orders of Allah, the Exalted, and executed those who had fallen into worshipping the golden calf, Allah, the Exalted, accepted their repentance. Generally speaking, sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone else who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further

trouble, they must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 54:

“…indeed, He is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.”

Despite the harmful behaviour towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of the people of the book living in Medina, even though they clearly recognized his truthfulness, which was discussed in their divine scriptures, Allah, the Exalted, reminded them of the fact that He is All Forgiving so that they were encouraged to sincerely repent to Him. Many of them however did not take this opportunity and instead continued to oppose Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A muslim must always remember that just because one is not punished immediately for their sins it does not mean they will not be punished at all. They must take the opportunities granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, to sincerely repent and mend their ways before these opportunities run out and they face the consequences of their actions. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 42:

“And never think that Allāh is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays them for a Day when eyes will stare [in horror].”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 55-56

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَـٰمُوسَىٰ لَن نُّؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَى ٱللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ ٱلصَّـٰعِقَةُ وَأَنتُمْ تَنظُرُونَ 

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَـٰكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ 

“And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we will never believe you until we see Allah outright"; so the thunderbolt took you while you were looking on.

Then We revived you after your death that perhaps you would be grateful.”

These verses reflect the pride that some of the children of Israel possessed. As they looked down upon people believing they were better, they questioned why the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was granted the honor of speaking to Allah, the Exalted, directly and bearing His message. If they acknowledged his superior status they would not have made such as disrespectful demand. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 55:

"*And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we will never believe you until we see Allah outright"…"*

Pride at all costs must be avoided as an atom's worth of it is enough to take one to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. The proud person looks down upon others believing they are superior even though they are not aware of the rank of people in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. They base their foolish belief on worldly standards, such as wealth and social status. One must never forget that true superiority lies in how much one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

In addition, as a person is not aware whether they or someone else will die as a muslim, they must avoid believing they are superior to others, irrespective of the good deeds they perform. Finally, one must recognize that everything they possess and every good deed they perform is only possible through the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He alone provides one with the opportunity, energy, inspiration, knowledge and ability to perform a righteous deed or obtain a worldly blessing.

Pride also causes one to reject the truth when it is presented to them as it contradicts their desires. The children of Israel physically witnessed many miracles of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and the miraculous destruction of Pharaoh and his army yet as the code of conduct the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, brought them contradicted their desires they attempted to make excuses in order to reject it and him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 55:

"*And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we will never believe you until we see Allah outright"…"*

Muslims must avoid this attitude and instead support their verbal claim of respecting and loving the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by sincerely obeying him in all situations. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

“He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah…”

Despite the arrogance and disobedience of the children of Israel, Allah, the Exalted, repeatedly gave them opportunities to sincerely repent and mend their ways. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 55-56:

“And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we will never believe you until we see Allah outright"; so the thunderbolt took you while you were looking on. Then We revived you after your death that perhaps you would be grateful.”

One must never be fooled by the facts that the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, is not always obvious to people nor does it come immediately. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 61:

“And if Allāh were to impose blame on the people for their wrongdoing, He would not have left upon it [i.e., the earth] any creature, but He defers them for a specified term. And when their term has come, they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede [it].”

One must therefore take the many chances Allah, the Exalted, grants them in order to sincerely repent and mend their ways before their time runs out. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah,

the Exalted, and whoever else has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Then they must continue to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation. They must ensure they only perform good deeds for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and therefore must not expect nor hope for gratitude from people. They must show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, through their speech by speaking good or remaining silent and finally they must use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner has combined sincere repentance with gratitude. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 55-56:

“And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we will never believe you until we see Allah outright"; so the thunderbolt took you while you were looking on. Then We revived you after your death that perhaps you would be grateful.”

This leads to further blessings in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

This also leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to take the countless opportunities Allah, the Exalted, extends people so that they reform themselves, then the very worldly things they obtained through His disobedience will become a source of stress and anxiety for them, even if they have moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verses 55-56:

"Do they think that what We extend to them of wealth and children. Is [because] We hasten for them good things? Rather, they do not perceive."

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Overall, they will lead a miserable and depressed life in this world and what follows is only worse. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 57

وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْغَمَامَ وَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْمَنَّ وَٱلسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُوا۟ مِن طَيِّبَٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنَٰكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَٰكِن كَانُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

“And We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails, [saying], ''Eat from the good things with which We have provided you.'' And they wronged Us not - but they were [only] wronging themselves.”

Allah, the Exalted, continues to remind the people of the book the many blessings He bestowed on their ancestors and by extension on them. While the children of Israel were in the desert, after the destruction of Pharaoh and his army, Allah, the Exalted, provided constant shade for them and provision which reached them with minimal effort. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 57:

“And We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails, [saying], "Eat from the good things with which We have provided you."…”

The constant shade from the heat of the Sun represented the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which is always shading the people of this Earth. The mercy which protects them from harmful things, even if this protection is not obvious to them, and it directs them towards peace of mind in both worlds. And the provision He provides the creation includes all the things one needs to survive in this world so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. These two specific blessings are enough of a reason for one to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by sincerely obeying Him at all times. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Gratitude also includes one correcting their intention so that they only act to please Allah, the Exalted, and therefore desire no reward or gratitude from people. It involves speaking good or remaining silent as well. This all leads to further blessings and reward in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

And it also leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if one fails to show gratitude and instead misuses the blessings they have been provided, which always leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they are only wronging themself, as the consequences of their actions will rebound onto them in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 57:

“And We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails, [saying], "Eat from the good things with which We have provided you." And they wronged Us not - but they were [only] wronging themselves.”

The very worldly things one obtains through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will become a source of stress and anxiety for them in both worlds, even if they manage to obtain some moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 23 Al Mu’minun, verses 55-56:

“Do they think that what We extend to them of wealth and children. Is [because] We hasten for them good things? Rather, they do not perceive.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 57:

“…“Eat from the good things with which We have provided you."…”

Generally speaking, this verse also reminds people that Allah, the Exalted, only advises people towards what is good for them in both worlds. He has only forbidden those things which are harmful for a person in respect to their mental, physical and spiritual health. For example, one does not need to be a doctor to understand the many negative consequences of consuming alcohol. Not only does it cause mental and physical problems, when drank in small or large quantities, but also many social problems which often lead to violent crimes. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 157:

“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written [i.e., described] in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and prohibits them from what is wrong and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them…”

Those who adhere to the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, will be free of the burden and shackles of poor mental, physical and spiritual health, so that they can lead a life of peace in both worlds.

Whereas, those who abandon the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, and instead indulge in the harmful things He has prohibited will be burdened with countless physical, mental and spiritual problems and as a result they will lead a life of misery in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 57:

"…"Eat from the good things with which We have provided you." And they wronged Us not - but they were [only] wronging themselves."

Just like the wise person listens and obeys their medical doctor, who prescribes bitter medicine and a strict diet plan, as it leads to good mental and physical health, a wise person will listen and obey the instructions of Allah, the Exalted, the All Knowing, in order to achieve good mental and physical health in both worlds. As Allah, the Exalted, controls the spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, it is inconceivable that a person can achieve peace of mind while disobeying Him. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

"And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep."

In addition, eating from good things, mentioned in verse 57, also includes obtaining and utilizing only what is lawful. One must understand that the external foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilizing the lawful, while the internal foundation of Islam is one's intention. If one or both of these are corrupt then all of one's actions will become corrupt and therefore

unacceptable to Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 57:

“And We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails, [saying], "Eat from the good things with which We have provided you." And they wronged Us not - but they were [only] wronging themselves.”

Allah, the Exalted, warned the people of the book living in Medina not to adopt ingratitude to Him, just like their ancestors did. But in most cases, this warning fell on deaf ears, as they continued to oppose Islam despite recognising its truthfulness. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

Muslims must avoid behaving in the same manner and instead adopt gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verses 15-16:

“…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book [i.e., the Qur’ān]. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 58-59

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ٱدْخُلُوا۟ هَـٰذِهِ ٱلْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا۟ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَٱدْخُلُوا۟ ٱلْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا۟ حِطَّةٌ نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَـٰيَـٰكُمْ ۚ وَسَنَزِيدُ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

فَبَدَّلَ ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا۟ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ ٱلَّذِى قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنزَلْنَا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا۟ رِجْزًا مِّنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

“And [recall] when We said, "Enter this city and eat from it wherever you will in [ease and] abundance, and enter the gate bowing humbly and say, 'Relieve us of our burdens [i.e., sins].' We will [then] forgive your sins for you, and We will increase the doers of good [in goodness and reward].

But those who wronged changed [those words] to a statement other than that which had been said to them, so We sent down upon those who wronged a punishment [i.e., plague] from the sky because they were defiantly disobeying.”

Allah, the Exalted, continues to remind the people of the book how He bestowed their ancestors with many blessings and how these blessings were met with ingratitude. He was warning the people of the book living in Medina to avoid the behaviour of their ancestors and instead show gratitude to Him. This involves correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. An indication of one's sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, is that they will not hope nor expect for reward or gratitude from people. The one who acts for the sake of people will be told to gain their reward from the people they acted for on Judgement Day, which will not be possible. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Gratitude with the tongue is shown when one speaks what is good or remains silent. And gratitude with one's actions is shown by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An aspect of this gratitude the people of the book living in Medina should have shown Allah, the Exalted, was to accept Islam when it was presented to them as they clearly recognized its truthfulness. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 58:

“And [recall] when We said, "Enter this city and eat from it wherever you will in [ease and] abundance…””

After the destruction of Pharoah, the children of Israel were commanded to enter a city which Allah, the Exalted, designated for them, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. This city is not named in these verses as this information is not relevant to learn the important lessons these verses teach. One must therefore always aim to research and study relevant information, which will aid them to increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and study and act on those things which will be questioned about on Judgement Day. In addition, this verse indicates the importance of understanding that in most cases, a person receives blessings in both worlds according to their efforts. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 39:

“And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives.”

The children of Israel were promised a life of ease after they struggled against the tyrannical nation which was ruling that city at the time. One must

therefore understand that just like they cannot obtain worldly success without real effort, neither will they obtain spiritual success in the form of peace of mind and success in both worlds without striving hard in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is strange how many muslims find time and energy to dedicate to things which entertain them and please their desires yet find no time or energy to learning and acting on Islamic teachings so that they can use the blessings they have been granted correctly. If a muslim chooses to put in the minimal effort, which involves fulfilling the obligatory duties, then they will be rewarded accordingly. But if they desire more blessings in both worlds, then they must strive for it. Islam is not for lazy people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 58:

“And [recall] when We said, "Enter this city and eat from it wherever you will in [ease and] abundance…"”

Allan, the Exalted, commanded them to fight the tyrant nation which was inhabiting that city and guaranteed them victory beforehand. But as they did not desire to make the sacrifices their faith demanded from them and only wished to live a life fulfilling their worldly desires, they rudely disobeyed Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verses 21-26:

“O my people, enter the blessed land [i.e., Palestine] which Allāh has assigned to you and do not turn back [from fighting in Allāh's cause] and

[thus] become losers." They said, "O Moses, indeed within it is a people of tyrannical strength, and indeed, we will never enter it until they leave it; but if they leave it, then we will enter." Said two men from those who feared [to disobey] upon whom Allāh had bestowed favor, "Enter upon them through the gate, for when you have entered it, you will be predominant. And upon Allāh rely, if you should be believers." They said, "O Moses, indeed we will not enter it, ever, as long as they are within it; so go, you and your Lord, and fight. Indeed, we are remaining right here." [Moses] said, "My Lord, indeed I do not possess [i.e., control] except myself and my brother, so part us from the defiantly disobedient people." [Allāh] said, "Then indeed, it is forbidden to them for forty years [in which] they will wander throughout the land. So do not grieve over the defiantly disobedient people.""

As a result of their defiance, they were left to wander the desert for 40 years until Allah, the Exalted, gave them another opportunity to sincerely obey Him, make the sacrifices their faith demanded from them and enter the city which was designated to them under the leadership of another Holy Prophet, peace be upon him.

Even though Allah, the Exalted, guaranteed them victory yet they disobeyed Him. This indicates their lack of trust in the promise of Allah, the Exalted. This occurs when one possesses weak faith. In order to avoid lacking trust in the promises and warnings of Allah, the Exalted, one must adopt strong faith. This is only achieved by learning and acting on divine knowledge so that one understands the countless examples in history when Allah, the Exalted, fulfilled His promises and warnings. Strong faith will ensure one remains firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of the appearance of the situation, as they firmly believe the promises and warnings of Allah, the Exalted, cannot be averted by anyone.

In addition, one must always remember that when they take on a specific role they must fulfill the responsibilities attached to that role in order to fulfill the role's conditions. For example, a licensed driver must obey the rules of the road in order to fulfil the condition of being a licensed driver. Similarly, a person who accepts Islam as their faith must fulfill the responsibilities attached to it in order to fulfill the requirements of their faith. This requires one to sacrifice and control their desires so that they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Just like a person who fails to fulfil the responsibilities attached to their occupation will get in trouble with their employer, so will the one who accepts Islam as their faith yet fails to fulfill the responsibilities attached to it. Verbal declaration of faith is simply not enough. One must support it with acts of obedience, which involves making sacrifices. Words without actions have very little weight in Islam.

Allah, the Exalted, gave the children of Israel another opportunity, amongst countless others, to correct their error of disobeying Him, by entering the city which was chosen for them and fight the tyrannical nation which occupied it in order to achieve the victory that was guaranteed to them beforehand. Allah, the Exalted, granted them this city in order to make things easy for them so that they could lead a life of obedience to Him, which would ensure they obtained peace of mind and success in both worlds. All they were commanded to do was to show humility to Him, which is an important aspect of obeying Allah, the Exalted. The humble person will always find it easier to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Whereas, the arrogant person will only ever want to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to

themself, as they dislike subjugating their desires to the commands of another. An aspect of humility is to admit one’s faults and seek the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and amend one’s behaviour in the future. Generally speaking, sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. If one combines humility with repentance they will sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation and this would lead to more blessings and reward from Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 58:

“*And [recall] when We said, "Enter this city and eat from it wherever you will in [ease and] abundance, and enter the gate bowing humbly and say, 'Relieve us of our burdens [i.e., sins].' We will [then] forgive your sins for you, and We will increase the doers of good [in goodness and reward].”*

And chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

It is therefore important for muslims to adopt humility as it will ensure they submit to the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, at all times and guide them to sincere repentance whenever they commit sins. Humility is adopted when one recognizes the fact that Allah, the Exalted, created them from nothing, granted them countless and continuous blessings even though they did not earn or deserve them, covers their faults despite their continuous disobedience to Him and promises them a great reward for the little amount of good they do, even though the source of the good deeds they perform is none but Allah, the Exalted, as He alone grants them the inspiration, knowledge, ability, opportunity to perform the good deeds. When one learns and acts on Islamic knowledge these facts will become apparent to them and this in turn will lead to humility towards Allah, the Exalted, and people, humility without weakness in the latter case. In addition, the one who adopts humility will not cherry pick which commands and prohibitions to act upon and which ones to ignore. Humility reminds one that they are nothing but a servant of Allah, the Exalted, and must therefore hear and obey under every circumstance, even if their desires are contradicted, as they know that Allah, the Exalted, only commands and prohibits according to what is best for them. Whereas, the arrogant person will pick and choose when to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and when to disobey Him according to their own desires. So even though it appears they believe and obey Allah, the Exalted, but in reality they only worship their own desires. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire…”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 58-59:

“And [recall] when We said, "Enter this city and eat from it wherever you will in [ease and] abundance, and enter the gate bowing humbly and say, 'Relieve us of our burdens [i.e., sins].' We will [then] forgive your sins for you, and We will increase the doers of good [in goodness and reward]. But those who wronged changed [those words] to a statement other than that which had been said to them, so We sent down upon those who wronged a punishment [i.e., plague] from the sky because they were defiantly disobeying.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, practically demonstrated how one should behave on the day he conquered Mecca. When he entered the proximity of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, he bowed so low out of humility to Allah, the Exalted, that his face almost touched his saddle. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 397.

Whereas, many from the children of Israel failed to show the humility they were commanded to adopt. As a result, their arrogance encouraged them to disobey Allah, the Exalted, and misuse the blessings they were granted. Allah, the Exalted, then punished them for their persistent defiance. One

must ensure they avoid adopting arrogance, as an atom's worth of it is enough to take them to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265. Arrogance encourages one to reject the truth when it is presented to them as it challenges their desires, just like the children of Israel rejected the truth which were the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted. Arrogance also encourages one to look down upon others believing they are superior to them. This is a foolish attitude as no one is aware of their rank in the sight of Allah, the Exalted, nor are they aware if they or others will leave this world with their faith. In addition, every worldly blessing they possess was created by and belongs to none but Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, being proud over a worldly blessing which in reality belongs to another is simply foolish. As discussed earlier, one must avoid these negative traits by adopting humility, which is obtained by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 58-59:

"And [recall] when We said, "Enter this city and eat from it wherever you will in [ease and] abundance, and enter the gate bowing humbly and say, 'Relieve us of our burdens [i.e., sins].' We will [then] forgive your sins for you, and We will increase the doers of good [in goodness and reward]. But those who wronged changed [those words] to a statement other than that which had been said to them, so We sent down upon those who wronged a punishment [i.e., plague] from the sky because they were defiantly disobeying."

This verse also warns against innovating in matters of faith. One must adhere strictly to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoid other things, even if they are considered good deeds, as the more one acts on other things, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. If the children of Israel avoided innovating and instead adhered to their divine teachings they would have obtained peace of mind and blessings in both worlds.

In addition, these verses also warn against the temptation and test of times of ease and worldly blessings. The children of Israel were tested with victory and conquering a city and instead of showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Him, they grew arrogant and misused the blessings they were granted. One must always remember that times of ease is often a harder test to overcome, as the one who faces difficulties is often restricted and has no option but to wait for relief. Whereas, the one who faces times of ease has the resources and opportunities to easily disobey Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted. Muslims must therefore strive to act on the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, which advises that a believer will obtain reward and blessings in times of ease, when they show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, and obtain reward and blessings in times of difficulty by adopting patience. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one's words and actions and maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 59:

“But those who wronged changed [those words] to a statement other than that which had been said to them, so We sent down upon those who wronged a punishment [i.e., plague] from the sky because they were defiantly disobeying.”

It is important to note that the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, for those who adopt arrogance and misuse the blessings they have been granted is not always obvious, such a punishment from the sky. It is often subtle where a person fails to connect their negative attitude and disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, to their punishment. These subtle punishments take the form of stress, anxiety, depression and addiction to harmful substances. The very worldly blessings these people obtain through disobeying Allah, the Exalted, become a source of their misery, despite the fact they have all the worldly blessings one could imagine. As they cannot connect their disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, to their punishment, they then blame the people and things around them, such as their spouse, children, relatives and friends, and as a result they destroy these relationships and things, even though these things are the only decent things in their lives. They therefore further destroy their lives with their own hands. This punishment may not be as epic as punishment descending from the sky, yet it can often be more painful, as this person leads a life of misery which often leads to mental breakdowns and even suicide, despite the fact they have moments of fun and entertainment and have the world at their feet. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 60

۞ وَإِذِ ٱسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِۦ فَقُلْنَا ٱضْرِب بِّعَصَاكَ ٱلْحَجَرَ ۖ فَٱنفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ ٱثْنَتَا
عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا ۖ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ ۖ كُلُوا۟ وَٱشْرَبُوا۟ مِن رِّزْقِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا۟ فِى
ٱلْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ٦٠

“And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people, so We said, "Strike with your staff the stone." And there gushed forth from it twelve springs, and every people [i.e., tribe] knew its watering place. "Eat and drink from the provision of Allah, and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.""

The Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was completely sincere to his people as he was constantly concerned about their guidance and wellbeing. One must adopt this excellent quality as it is a crucial aspect of Islam, according to the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim number 196. Sincerity to others is best achieved when one simply treats others how they wish to be treated by people. One must aid them in things which are good and beneficial in both worldly and religious matters and warn them against bad and useless matters. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 60:

"*And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people…"*

After leaving Egypt and witnessing the miraculous destruction of Pharoah and his army, the children of Israel were journeying in the desert and therefore needed provision. Allah, the Exalted, directly provided for them at the request of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 57:

"And We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails, [saying], "Eat from the good things with which We have provided you."…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 60:

“*And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people, so We said, "Strike with your staff the stone." And there gushed forth from it twelve springs…”*

They should have shown gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, for these great blessings. Gratitude involves correcting one’s intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A proof of one’s sincerity is that they do not desire nor expect any gratitude or payback from people. Gratitude with the tongue involves speaking good or remaining silent. And gratitude with one’s actions involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in divine teachings. Gratitude leads to an increase in blessings and reward and peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 60:

“*And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people, so We said, "Strike with your staff the stone." And there gushed forth from it twelve springs…*”

Allah, the Exalted, could have caused the springs to gush out without any effort from the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, but one of the reasons he caused this miracle to be shown on the hands of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was to strengthen the faith of the children of Israel. This indicates the importance of strengthening one’s faith as it will aid them to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Strengthening faith is best achieved by studying and learning on the timeless miracles granted to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him: the Holy Quran and his traditions. The more one dedicates themself to this, the stronger their faith will become and in turn the more they will remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

In addition, the miracle of the water was also shown on the hands of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, in order to strengthen the respect the children of Israel had for him. It is clear that many of them paid little respect to him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 55:

“And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we will never believe you until we see Allāh outright"…”

And chapter 61 As Saf, verse 5:

“And when Moses said to his people, "O my people, why do you harm me while you certainly know that I am the messenger of Allāh to you?"…”

A lack of respect for one’s Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, will prevent them from sincerely obeying him at all times. This is one of the reasons why respecting the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is obligatory. Claiming respect for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, through one’s tongue and ignoring his teachings is a clear sign of one’s lack of respect for him. One must nurture their respect for him by studying his life and teachings. When they observe the great sacrifices he made for the sake of guiding people and his unparalleled sincerity towards others, the one with an unbiased mind will have no choice but to respect and love him. This is another reason why studying the teachings of Islam is so vital for muslims.

Finally, another reason the miracle of the water was shown on the hands of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was to remind people the importance of supporting their supplications to Allah, the Exalted, and their trust in Him with actions. One must cannot simply supplicate and avoid sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and expect a positive response. Every supplication must be supported by actions in order for it to be effective. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 10:

"…To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it…"

Trusting in Allah, the Exalted, has two aspects. The first is using the resources one has, such as their physical strength, in the right way. The second aspect is fully believing that the outcome of every situation will be best for everyone involved, as Allah, the Exalted, always chooses what is best for people, even if the wisdoms behind His choices are not obvious to people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 60:

“*And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people, so We said, "Strike with your staff the stone." And there gushed forth from it twelve springs, and every people [i.e., tribe] knew its watering place…”*

As the children of Israel were very tribal people who had fabricated many social barriers which separated people from one another, Allah, the Exalted, caused twelve separate springs to gush out in order to avoid arguments. The code of conduct given to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, encourages unity and the elimination of any social barriers which separates people from another, such as nationality, gender, social class and ethnicity. A muslim must always remember that the only thing which makes one superior to another is how much they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…”

But it is important to note as a person’s intention and many of their actions are hidden from others, one cannot assume they are better than others. Instead, they should advise others to do good and warn them against bad things without believing they are better than others and also concentrate on

sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, themself with the hope they leave this world in that state. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 103:

“And hold firmly to the rope of Allāh all together and do not become divided…”

Unity is vital as it encourages one to fulfil the rights of others, according to the teachings of Islam and ensures people work together in matters which are praiseworthy, which in turn benefits them in both worlds. Through unity in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, justice and peace spreads throughout society.

Beneficial unity is achieved when each family and society encourages its members to unify in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. But when the members of a family and society are unified based on blood, ethnicity, social status and nationality, it will always, sooner or later, lead to disunity amongst its members. As these worldly bonds are weak, it is only a matter of time before they break and cause disunity within families and societies. Muslims must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who united the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, based on faith despite the fact they were from different tribes, nationalities and social classes. This was the secret behind their strength. The bond of faith is the strongest bond and when one is joined to another through it, then it will never break. The bond of faith is manifested when people encourage each other to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation and warn each other against disobeying Him. Whereas, worldly

bonds will always encourage blind loyalty to one another, even if it involves the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 60:

“*And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people, so We said, "Strike with your staff the stone." And there gushed forth from it twelve springs, and every people [i.e., tribe] knew its watering place. "Eat and drink from the provision of Allah…”"*

Allah, the Exalted, encouraged the children of Israel to demonstrate gratitude for the favors He granted them by using the worldly blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Him. When each person demonstrates gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, they will fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, according to their potential and fulfill the rights of people. This will ensure justice and peace spreads within society. But those who demonstrate ingratitude by misusing the blessings they have been granted will wrong others and cause corruption to spread throughout society. This has been warned at the end of verse 60. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 60:

“…Eat and drink from the provision of Allah, and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption."

Allah, the Exalted, reminded the people of the book living in Medina in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the importance of gratitude so that they could achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. An aspect of this was to accept Islam as they clearly recognized its truthfulness. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

To conclude, Muslims must give up the foolish attitude of only verbally praising Allah, the Exalted, while showing ingratitude in all other aspects, such as their intention, other speech and actions. Instead, they must adhere to all the different aspects of gratitude so that they are granted more blessings and reward in both worlds, which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 61

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَٰمُوسَىٰ لَن نَّصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامٍ وَٰحِدٍ فَٱدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنۢبِتُ ٱلْأَرْضُ مِنۢ
بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّآئِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصَلِهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ ٱلَّذِى هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ
بِٱلَّذِى هُوَ خَيْرٌ ٱهْبِطُوا۟ مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُم مَّا سَأَلْتُمْ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلذِّلَّةُ
وَٱلْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَآءُو بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا۟ يَكْفُرُونَ بِـَٔايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ
وَيَقْتُلُونَ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ بِغَيْرِ ٱلْحَقِّ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوا۟ وَّكَانُوا۟ يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

“And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." [Moses] said, "Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into [any] settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked." And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah [upon them]. That was because they [repeatedly] disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That was because they disobeyed and were [habitually] transgressing.”

Even though Allah, the Exalted, provided the children of Israel wholesome food and water, which required little to no effort from themselves to obtain, yet they demonstrated ingratitude to Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 57:

“And We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails, [saying], "Eat from the good things with which We have provided you."…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 60:

“*And [recall] when Moses prayed for water for his people, so We said, "Strike with your staff the stone." And there gushed forth from it twelve springs…”*

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 61:

“*And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." [Moses] said, "Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into [any] settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked."…”*

They went as far as to request foods which where inferior in quality and status, as they were being provided directly from Allah, the Exalted. Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of adopting high aspirations during one's life. A muslim must always aim to fulfill their purpose of creation above all else, as this alone gives their life value and meaning. Just like an invention is labeled a failure when it fails to fulfil its primary function of creation, so will the human being who fails to fulfil their purpose of creation, even if they manage to obtain worldly success. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me."

This is only achieved when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one lives a meaningful and fruitful life which is full of peace of mind, even if they face difficulties along the way. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The attitude and request of the children of Israel also reminds people to avoid assuming to know what is best for them, which often occurs when they observe others who possess more worldly things than them. This assumption will cause one to request things which were not granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, such as a spouse, children and wealth. Instead, a muslim must understand their lack of knowledge and foresight and acknowledge the fact that they may well be requesting and desiring something which is inferior in quality and status to what they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

This assumption often drives people to ingratitude when they fail to obtain what they desire. The truth is that the people one observes who possess more worldly blessings than them often face more stress. Stress which Allah, the Exalted, has protected them from by not granting those worldly blessings to them. One should avoid observing those who possess more worldly things than them in order to avoid adopting this attitude and instead observe those who possess less than them. In addition, they should focus their sight and effort on what they possess and strive to use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as peace of mind lies only in this. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

Whereas, desiring and pursuing things which were not granted to them can lead one to misusing the blessings they already possess. This only leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, adopting ingratitude to Allah, the Exalted, often causes one to worship Him for the sake of worldly gain, such as wealth and children. One must avoid this insincere behaviour as divine teachings were not revealed so that one uses them as a credit card to obtain worldly things. Allah, the Exalted, created worldly things and the worldly means to obtaining these things and they therefore should be used according to the teachings of Islam. For example, the one who desires a child should get married. Divine teachings were granted so that one learns how to use the blessings they have been granted correctly so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. The one who adopts ingratitude and only worship Allah, the Exalted, for the sake of worldly gain will find nothing but stress and disgrace in both worlds as they worship nothing but their own desires. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

“Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?...”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 61:

“And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." [Moses] said, "Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into [any] settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked." And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allāh [upon them]…”

As the children of Israel failed to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, they were covered with humiliation and disgrace. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 61:

“…*And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah [upon them]…”*

A muslim must avoid this distressful outcome by adopting gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. Gratitude involves correcting one’s intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A sign of one’s sincerity is that they do not expect nor hope for any gratitude or payback from people.

Gratitude with the tongue is shown when one speaks what is good or remains silent. Gratitude with one’s actions involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to further blessings and reward in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

Whereas, adopting ingratitude only causes one to misuse the blessings they have been granted. Whenever this ungrateful person is challenged and advised to adopt gratitude, they rebel and sink deeper into ingratitude and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This can even lead them to ignoring the divine teachings of the faith they verbally claim to believe in, as they encourage them to adopt gratitude. The more one sinks into ingratitude and disobedience the more vile their deeds become. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 61:

“And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." [Moses] said, "Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into [any] settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked." And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah [upon them]. That was because they [repeatedly] disbelieved in the signs of

Allah and killed the prophets without right. That was because they disobeyed and were [habitually] transgressing."

In the case of the children of Israel, their ingratitude to Allah, the Exalted, caused them to reject and ignore the teachings of their divine scriptures, and to reject and harm the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, which were sent to them in order to correct their deviant and ungrateful behaviour.

Muslims can adopt a similar attitude when they adopt ingratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Their ingratitude often takes the form of ignoring the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which contradict their desires, as they encourage them to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This can cause the ungrateful person to behave like a non-muslim while claiming belief in Islam verbally. This has been indicated in chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

"…And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me."

Faith and gratitude have always been tied together. This means one cannot believe correctly until they adopt gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. The one who adopts ingratitude will only follow in the footsteps of the children of Israel whose ingratitude to Allah, the Exalted, took them towards disbelief.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 61:

“And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." [Moses] said, "Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into [any] settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked." And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah [upon them]. That was because they [repeatedly] disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That was because they disobeyed and were [habitually] transgressing.”

This verse warns people of the danger of facing times of ease. The children of Israel were facing a time of ease compared to their previous state of being enslaved and tortured at the hands of Pharaoh and his people. Facing times of difficulties with patience is often easier than facing times of ease with gratitude, as the former often restricts a person and the options available to them. Therefore they have no option but to wait patiently for relief. Whereas, times of ease often leads to worldly blessings and numerous options, some of which can lead to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is the reason why the wealthy often disobey Allah, the Exalted, more as they have access to resources that the poor do not have, such as wealth. Therefore, one must bear the test of times of ease in mind and ensure they adhere to the advice given in the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a believer gains blessings and reward in both times of ease and difficulties as they respond

correctly to each situation. In times of ease they show gratitude, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. And in times of difficulty they show patience by avoiding complaining through their speech or actions and maintain sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 61:

“And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." [Moses] said, "Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into [any] settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked." And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah [upon them]. That was because they [repeatedly] disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That was because they disobeyed and were [habitually] transgressing.”

Allah, the Exalted, warned the people of the book living in Medina to avoid following in the footsteps of their ancestors through ingratitude to Allah, the Exalted. An aspect of this gratitude was to accept Islam as they clearly recognized its truthfulness. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

But as the majority of them clung to ingratitude, as they could not abandon using the blessings they had been granted according to their desires, they followed in the footsteps of their ancestors by harming the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, his mission and even attempted to kill him on several occasions. As a consequence of their ingratitude, Allah, the Exalted, disgraced them in this world and what follows in the hereafter will be even more severe. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 61:

“And [recall] when you said, "O Moses, we can never endure one [kind of] food. So call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions." [Moses] said, "Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into [any] settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked." And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah [upon them]. That was because they [repeatedly] disbelieved in the signs of

Allah and killed the prophets without right. That was because they disobeyed and were [habitually] transgressing."

This verse explains one of the reasons why the muslim nation appears to being suffering from humiliation wherever they are in the world. When muslims adopted the attitude of the children of Israel by becoming ungrateful to Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they were granted, Allah, the Exalted, covered them with humiliation. Superiority and success will only be granted to them when they follow in the footsteps of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, by proving their verbal declaration of belief through actions, by adopting gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

"So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers."

To conclude, muslims must avoid humiliation by adopting gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, through their intention, speech and actions, so that they use all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 62

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱلَّذِينَ هَادُوا۟ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ وَٱلصَّٰبِـِٔينَ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ
وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

"Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve."

Even though many have debated about who exactly the Sabeans mentioned in this verse are, it is unnecessary to dive deep into this discussion as it does not increase one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, to know this information. It is sufficient to know that they were a group of people on a particular faith who were invited to Islam, the correct religion and way of life. On a general note, one must avoid researching and discussing the things which do not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, such as the things which will be asked about on Judgement Day. If something will not be questioned on Judgement Day, it should be avoided by the seeker of knowledge.

In addition, this verse refers to those who truly believed in Allah, the Exalted, and the Day of Judgement by practically preparing for it, by using the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 62:

"*Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord…"*

This was true for these groups of people who behaved in this manner prior to the coming of the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and applies after him, as long as these groups accepted him and the divine law he brought. This step was easy for the people of the book to take as they clearly recognized the truthfulness of Islam, as the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran were discussed in the previous divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

But despite this invitation towards the truth, many from the people of the book still rejected Islam out of love of fulfilling their desires, which Islam would moderate, and out of love for holding onto the worldly things they had obtained, such as social status and leadership.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 62:

“*…who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord…”*

Generally speaking, this verse makes it clear that the one who truly believes in Allah, the Exalted, will support their verbal declaration of faith with acts of obedience. And the one who truly believes in the Day of Judgement will practically prepare for it. Both of these involve using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in divine teachings. From this one can judge how much or little they believe in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgement Day by assessing how much they use the blessings they have been granted correctly. The more they use them correctly, the stronger their faith in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgement Day but the less they use them correctly, the weaker their faith in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgement Day, despite what they may claim of possessing strong faith.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 62:

“*Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord…”*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is not actively mentioned in order to solidify the fact that belief in Allah, the Exalted, is not possible without belief in all His Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This has been made clear in chapter 4 An Nisa, verses 150-151:

“Indeed, those who disbelieve in Allāh and His messengers and wish to discriminate between Allāh and His messengers and say, "We believe in some and disbelieve in others," and wish to adopt a way in between. Those are the disbelievers, truly. And We have prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment.”

In addition, verse 62 indicates this truth also as it clearly separates the true believers from all the other faiths, despite the fact that the people of the book, the Jews and Christians, did believe in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgement Day. This shows that one cannot be considered a believer until they accept and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

“And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”

Generally speaking, one must therefore not be fooled into living a life according to their desires and believe that somehow they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. A lifestyle not modelled on Islam

will never be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of one's twisted and frankly, foolish belief. If Allah, the Exalted, was going to forgive everybody on Judgement Day, despite the fact many completely ignored Him, it would be make life in this world pointless and it would indicate that Allah, the Exalted, is unjust, as these people expect Him to treat the one who ignored Him equally to the one who sincerely obeyed Him. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 21:

"Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 62:

"*Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord…"*

This verse interjects in between the verses which discuss the children of Israel and their repeated acts of ingratitude to Allah, the Exalted, in order to make clear that the door of sincere repentance and reformation is always open for everyone. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as

long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Reformation includes adhering strictly to the teachings of the final law revealed to mankind namely, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This would ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 62:

"Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans [before Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him)] - those [among them] who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteousness - will have their reward with their Lord, and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve."

It is important to note that this verse does not mean that the one who sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessing they have been granted correctly, will not face any difficulties in this world, as this world is a place of test and trials. This verse means that whenever they face stress and sadness neither of them will overcome them so that they drown in fear and grief. Instead, they will overcome the periods of stress and sadness they face and maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they hold on to peace of mind at all times, especially during times of difficulty and stress. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Following the code of conduct of Islam, even if it contradicts one's desires, is just like following the advice of a medical doctor, who prescribes bitter medicines and a strict diet plan so that their patient achieves good mental and physical health.

Conversely, the one who abandons the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and especially in respect to muslims, fails to support their verbal declaration of faith with good deeds, will not be granted the protection from fear or grief. They will instead be overcome by moments of difficulties, even if they happen to have moments of fun and entertainment in between. As a result, they will lead a miserable and depressed life in this world and what follows in the hereafter will be worse. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 63-64

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ ٱلطُّورَ خُذُوا۟ مَآ ءَاتَيْنَٰكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ لَكُنتُم مِّنَ ٱلْخَٰسِرِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

"And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous."

Then you turned away after that. And if not for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have been among the losers."

Allah, the Exalted, did not compel the children of Israel to believe in Him but only urged them to fulfil their promise to Him after they accepted faith willingly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 63:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount…”

As faith in Allah, the Exalted, is a matter of the spiritual heart, no one can compel another to believe in Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

“There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion…”

This alone erases the false notion that Islam spread through the sword. A sword may subdue someone’s body but it can never subdue someone’s spiritual heart, which is the abode of faith in Allah, the Exalted.

Raising the mount over them was a warning for them not to break their promise of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, and it was a means to strengthen their faith through witnessing such a great event. This warning and strengthening of faith was meant to encourage them to learn, understand and act on the Torah that was granted to them. This would ensure they

behaved righteously, which involves using the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 63:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous."”

Determination and remembering what is in the Torah means to strive to learn, understand and act on the divine teachings within the Torah, and it therefore extends far beyond merely reciting it without understanding. Only through this method of understanding and implementing divine teachings will one achieve righteousness. It is important to note that determination does not mean perfection, as Allah, the Exalted, does not demand nor expect perfection from people. This has been made clear in Islamic teachings. For example, the following verse makes it clear that perfection is not possible, as seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, has been advised. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

“…so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness…”

Determination means that one must sincerely strive to understand and implement divine teachings, which in turn ensures they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and whenever

they happen to commit sins, to sincerely repent and continue travelling on the path of obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, they must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

In addition, determination and remembering what is in it also refers to the important concept of strictly adhering to divine teachings and avoiding other things, even if these are considered good deeds. The truth is that the more one acts on things taken from other sources, the less they will act on divine teachings. Ignoring this important concept is the cause of many negative cultural practices and beliefs entering one's faith. For example, one only needs to observe muslim weddings to see how many non-muslim traditions and practices have been adopted by them. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606 that any matter which is not rooted in the Holy Quran and his traditions will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Determination and remembering what is in it also refers to applying divine teachings in every situation one faces. Cherry picking when to act on divine teachings and when to ignore them according to one's desires contradicts the command in this verse. One must not treat their faith like a coat which they put on or take off according to their desires. They must instead adhere to divine teachings in every situation whether it suits their desires or not, as this will ensure the best outcome for them in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Determination and remembering what is in it also refers to the importance of studying and acting on divine teachings so that one obtains certainty of faith. Strong faith ensures one adheres firmly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. This is the righteousness mentioned in verse 63. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 63:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous.""

This verse also applies to the muslims in respect to the Holy Quran. Reciting it in a beautiful voice while failing to understand its meaning and acting on it defies the purpose of the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran is not a book of recitation, it is a book of guidance. Guidance can only be achieved when one learns and acts on it. Just like a map will only guide one to their destination when they act on it, similarly, the Holy Quran will only take one to their destination of peace of mind and success in both worlds when they understand and act on it. This will ensure they use the blessings they have

been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Fulfilling the purpose of the Holy Quran is the covenant every muslim took with Allah, the Exalted, when they accepted Islam as their faith, just like fulfilling the purpose of the Torah, by learning and acting on it, was the covenant taken with Allah, the Exalted, by the children of Israel. But if muslims follow in the footsteps of the children of Israel by turning away from fulfilling their covenant of fulfilling the purpose of the Holy Quran then they will not gain peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 63-64:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous." Then you turned away after that…”

Failing to fulfil the purpose of the Holy Quran will only cause one to misuse the blessings they possess. This leads to difficulties and stress in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

But as long as a person is alive, the door of second chances and reformation is always open, as Allah, the Exalted, does not seize people immediately for their disobedience. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 64:

“Then you turned away after that. And if not for the favor of Allāh upon you and His mercy, you would have been among the losers.”

But it is important to note that that door of second chances and reformation will not remain open forever. A muslim must seize these opportunities before their time runs out by fulfilling their covenant with Allah, the Exalted, by understanding and acting on the Holy Quran and by extension, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 61:

“And if Allāh were to impose blame on the people for their wrongdoing, He would not have left upon it [i.e., the earth] any creature, but He defers them for a specified term. And when their term has come, they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede [it].”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 63-64:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous." Then you turned away after that. And if not for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have been among the losers.”

These verses also highlight the importance of understanding the correct definition of success and failure in this world. Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that learning and acting on divine teachings, whereby one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, ensures success in both worlds. Whereas, ignoring the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, only leads to loss in both worlds. One must observe the people around them and those from the past in order to conclude how true this reality is. Those with the most worldly luxuries are often the ones who face the most stress, anxiety, depression and suicidal tendencies than anyone else. True success therefore does not lie in worldly things, such as wealth, family, fame and a fancy career, as all of these things will only become a source of stress and misery for its bearer if they misuse the blessings they have been granted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 63-64:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that perhaps you may become righteous." Then you turned away after that. And if not for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have been among the losers.”

Allah, the Exalted, reminded the people of the book living in Medina how their ancestors failed to fulfil their covenant with Him. He warned them not to follow in their footsteps by failing to understand and act on the unaltered teachings of the Torah. An aspect of this was to accept Islam, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran had been discussed in the Torah and Bible. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

But the vast majority of the people of the book followed in the footsteps of their ancestors and abandoned fulfilling their promise of acting on the teachings of the Torah. They were overpowered by their love for fulfilling their desires by using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to them. As a result, they could not accept Islam, as it would have forced them to control their desires and use the blessings they possessed in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. They also feared losing the social status and leadership they had acquired by intentionally misinterpreting the teachings of the Torah. They failed to take the second chances offered to them and as a result they became losers in both worlds. Muslims must avoid behaving in this manner, as claiming faith with one’s words is not enough to save them from this fate if they fail to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One must accept that controlling their desires according to the teachings of Islam will better serve them in both worlds, just like a wise patient adheres strictly to the bitter medicines and strict diet plan advised by their medical doctor, knowing it will serve their physical and mental health better than unleashing their desires and ignoring their doctor’s advice.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 65-66

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱعْتَدَوْا۟ مِنكُمْ فِى ٱلسَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا۟ قِرَدَةً خَـٰسِـِٔينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

فَجَعَلْنَـٰهَا نَكَـٰلًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

“And you had already known about those who transgressed among you concerning the Sabbath, and We said to them, "Be apes, despised."

And We made it a deterrent punishment for those who were present and those who succeeded [them] and a lesson for those who fear Allah.”

The first part of verse 65 reminds one the importance of acting on the knowledge their possess. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 65:

"*And you had already known about those who transgressed among you concerning the Sabbath…"*

Knowledge has no real value until it is actualized. This is true for both worldly and religious knowledge. In the latter case, the Holy Quran has harshly criticized those who possess religious knowledge yet fail to act on it. Chapter 62 Al Jumu'ah, verse 5:

"…and then did not take it on (did not act on their knowledge) is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]…"

Knowledge without action is similar to the one who possesses a map to a safe destination yet fails to act on it in order to reach safety. One must implement all the stages of seeking knowledge in order to truly benefit from it in both worlds. The first stage is to adopt the correct intention, which is to gain and act on Islamic knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Those who seek religious knowledge for the incorrect intention have been warned of Hell in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253. The second stage is gaining Islamic knowledge from a reliable source. The final stage is striving to implement this knowledge into one's speech, actions and general behaviour so that they use the blessings they have been granted in

ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Fulfilling all three stages leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 65:

“And you had already known about those who transgressed among you concerning the Sabbath…”

Even though those who transgressed the Sabbath from the children of Israel were the ancestors of the people of the book living in Medina during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet Allah, the Exalted, referred to them as if they were from the same group. This is because the one who behaves like a particular group is in fact from them, even if they belong to different generations. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031. This is why it is important for muslims to sincerely strive to follow in the footsteps of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, so that they are counted amongst them in the hereafter. But if they claim love for them verbally yet follow in the footsteps of the hypocrites, who ignored learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, then they will be counted as one of the hypocrites. Allah, the Exalted, was warning the people of the book not to follow in the footsteps of their ancestors, otherwise they would be counted as one of them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 65:

“And you had already known about those who transgressed among you concerning the Sabbath, and We said to them, "Be apes, despised."

The story of those who transgressed the Sabbath is discussed in more detail elsewhere in the Holy Quran, and only briefly referred to in the main verses under discussion as the aim of these verses is to warn the people of the book, and by extension the muslim community, not to disobey Allah, the Exalted, as this leads to trouble in both worlds and the importance of learning from the consequences of the actions of others. Whereas, the main lesson discussed in the other verses which refer to the Sabbath breakers indicates the importance of avoiding disobeying Allah, the Exalted, and the importance of commanding good and forbidding evil. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verses 163-166:

“And ask them about the town that was by the sea - when they transgressed in [the matter of] the sabbath - when their fish came to them openly on their sabbath day, and the day they had no sabbath they did not come to them. Thus did We give them trial because they were defiantly disobedient. And

when a community among them said, "Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allāh is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?" they [the advisors] said, "To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him." And when they [i.e., those advised] forgot that by which they had been reminded, We saved those who had forbidden evil and seized those who wronged, with a wretched punishment, because they were defiantly disobeying. So when they were insolent about that which they had been forbidden, We said to them, "Be apes, despised.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 65-66:

"And you had already known about those who transgressed among you concerning the Sabbath, and We said to them, "Be apes, despised." And We made it a deterrent punishment for those who were present and those who succeeded [them] and a lesson for those who fear Allah."

These verses warn against transgressing the limits set by Allah, the Exalted, as it leads to severe punishment in both worlds. Generally speaking, in worldly life, the very worldly things one has obtained through disobeying Allah, the Exalted, will become a source of stress and misery for their bearer. These people will not understand why they face stress, anxiety and depression as they have the world in their hands and are able to fulfill all their worldly desires. They fail to understand that it is Allah, the Exalted, who controls the spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, and therefore He alone controls whether one obtains peace of mind or not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

As a result, they will blame the good people around them, such as their relatives and friends, and break their ties with them. This will only cause them to sink further into mental health issues. This dark and difficult journey often ends in suicide. But what follows in the hereafter will be worse. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

This can only be avoided when one sincerely repents and avoids transgressing the limits of Allah, the Exalted, and instead strives to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Those who transgressed the Sabbath were changed into apes as they acted like animals when they acted completely according to their desires. Muslims must fear they will be transformed spiritually into animals as a punishment from Allah, the Exalted, if they behave in the same way. This transformation would only cause them to sink deeper into fulfilling their desires and misusing the blessings they have been granted, which in turn leads to stress and difficulties in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 65-66:

“And you had already known about those who transgressed among you concerning the Sabbath, and We said to them, "Be apes, despised." And We made it a deterrent punishment for those who were present and those who succeeded [them] and a lesson for those who fear Allah.”

These verses also indicate the importance of avoiding being self-absorbed whereby one fails to learn lessons from the things and people around them and from history. A muslim must learn to constantly observe the consequences of the actions of others, whether these people are known to them or not, whether they belong to their generation or not. Learning from the consequences of the actions of others is one of the most important ways of learning how one must behave towards Allah, the Exalted, and people. For example, when one observes the person who misuses the blessings they have been granted and the mental and physical problems they constantly face, despite having the world at their feet, it will become clear to them not to follow in their footsteps by misusing the blessings they have been granted. Whereas, when they observe those who used the blessings they were

granted correctly, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and how Allah, the Exalted, granted them peace of mind, despite the fact they faced difficulties in this world, it will become clear to them that they must follow in their footsteps in order to achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds.

In addition, observing others who have less worldly things also encourages one to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Gratitude involves correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Acting for the sake of any other reason, such as people, leads to a loss of reward. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Gratitude with the tongue is shown by speaking what is good or remaining silent. And gratitude with one's actions is using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to further blessings and reward in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

Observing others who are facing more severe difficulties also encourages one to belittle the difficulties they are facing. This will aid one to remain patient. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one's speech and actions and maintaining one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted.

Observing the path chosen by others and the consequences of their choice will also aid one to avoid adopting a foolish attitude whereby they believe they can choose the same wrong path as others and still achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. When one fails to observe others correctly, they will chart their course in life according to their desires, social media, fashion and culture but this will only cause them misery in both worlds. This reality is obvious when one observes the other people who have made the same choice in the past and present. But as indicated by the end of verse 66, only those who fear Allah, the Exalted, and the consequences of their actions in both worlds, will pay heed to the lessons they should learn from observing others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 66:

"And We made it a deterrent punishment for those who were present and those who succeeded [them] and a lesson for those who fear Allah."

The one who does not fear Allah, the Exalted, and the consequences of their actions will instead unleash their desires and misuse the blessings they have been granted. And just like those in history and in present times that behave in the same manner face trouble, so will they.

Verse 66 also hints at the fact that the people of the book, who succeeded their ancestors who transgressed the Sabbath, do not fear Allah, the Exalted, as those who fear Him have been mentioned separately. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 66:

“And We made it a deterrent punishment for those who were present and those who succeeded [them] and a lesson for those who fear Allah.”

The majority of the people of the book living in Medina failed to fear Allah, the Exalted, and the consequences of their actions as they rejected Islam, even though its truthfulness was clear to them as they clearly recognized the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they were both discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

As a result, the people of the book faced punishment in both worlds, just like their ancestors did. Muslims must therefore avoid following in their footsteps and instead learn a lesson from the consequences of their actions and instead follow in the footsteps of those who fear Allah, the Exalted, such as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, by adhering to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 66:

“And We made it a deterrent punishment for those who were present and those who succeeded [them] and a lesson for those who fear Allah.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 67-73

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِۦٓ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن تَذْبَحُوا۟ بَقَرَةً ۖ قَالُوٓا۟ أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا ۖ قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِٱللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ ٱلْجَٰهِلِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

قَالُوا۟ ٱدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِىَ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّهُۥ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَّا فَارِضٌ وَلَا بِكْرٌ عَوَانٌۢ بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ ۖ فَٱفْعَلُوا۟ مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

قَالُوا۟ ٱدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا ۚ قَالَ إِنَّهُۥ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَآءُ فَاقِعٌ لَّوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ ٱلنَّٰظِرِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

قَالُوا۟ ٱدْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّن لَّنَا مَا هِىَ إِنَّ ٱلْبَقَرَ تَشَٰبَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّآ إِن شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

قَالَ إِنَّهُۥ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَّا ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ ٱلْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِى ٱلْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَّا شِيَةَ فِيهَا ۚ قَالُوا۟ ٱلْـَٰٔنَ جِئْتَ بِٱلْحَقِّ ۚ فَذَبَحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا۟ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَٱدَّٰرَْٰٔتُمْ فِيهَا ۖ وَٱللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

فَقُلْنَا ٱضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يُحْيِ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ وَيُرِيكُمْ
ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "Indeed, Allah commands you to slaughter a cow." They said, "Do you take us in ridicule?" He said, "I seek refuge in Allah from being among the ignorant."

They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is." [Moses] said, "[Allah] says, 'It is a cow which is neither old nor virgin, but median between that, so do what you are commanded.’”

They said, "Call upon your Lord to show us what is her color." He said, “He says, 'It is a yellow cow, bright in color - pleasing to the observers.'”

They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is. Indeed, [all] cows look alike to us. And indeed we, if Allah wills, will be guided.”

He said, "He says, 'It is a cow neither trained to plow the earth nor to irrigate the field, one free from fault with no spot upon her.'" They said, "Now you have come with the truth." So they slaughtered her, but they could hardly do it.

And [recall] when you slew a man and disputed over it, but Allah was to bring out that which you were concealing.

So We said, "Strike him [the slain man] with part of it [the slaughtered cow]." Thus does Allah bring the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you might reason.”

The command to slaughter a cow is explained further on as one of the main lessons being taught in these verses is the bad attitude of the children of Israel towards the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, and towards the command of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 67-73:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "Indeed, Allah commands you to slaughter a cow."… And [recall] when you slew a man and disputed over it, but Allah was to bring out that which you were concealing. So We said, "Strike him [the slain man] with part of it [the slaughtered cow]." Thus does Allah bring the dead to life…”

The Holy Quran is not a story book nor a history book which relates facts and figures. Instead, it only highlights certain aspects of history in order to teach specific lessons. The Holy Quran also often repeats the same story while explaining it from a different point of view in order to teach specific lessons. One must therefore accept the unparalleled style of the Holy Quran and concentrate on what has been discussed by Allah, the Exalted, instead of asking about things which have not been mentioned, as they are not required to learn the specific lessons they need to learn.

Allah, the Exalted, reminded the people of the book living in Medina during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, of the lack of respect shown by their ancestors towards the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 67:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "Indeed, Allah commands you to slaughter a cow." They said, "Do you take us in ridicule?"…”

The people of the book were behaving in a worse manner towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, despite recognizing him and the Holy Quran through their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

Muslims must therefore avoid behaving in the same manner by disrespecting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This occurs when one claims love and respect for him through their speech but fails to show it in their actions, by learning and acting on his traditions. It is frankly absurd to claim to love someone without knowing their life, character and teachings. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, proved their

love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by learning and acting on his traditions and prioritizing this over fulfilling their own desires. Those who fail to demonstrate their love practically for him are unlikely to end up with him in the hereafter as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that one will end up in the hereafter with those they love, applies to those who show their love practically. This is obvious when one observes the former nations which verbally claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, yet it is obvious they will not end up with them as they failed to practically follow them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 67:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "Indeed, Allah commands you to slaughter a cow." They said, "Do you take us in ridicule?"…”

The children of Israel clearly did not understand the wisdom behind slaughtering the cow but as they accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord and the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, they should have responded positively without hesitation. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 51:

“The only statement of the [true] believers when they are called to Allāh and His Messenger to judge between them is that they say, "We hear and we obey." And those are the successful.”

Generally speaking, a muslim does not need to understand the wisdom behind every decree and command of Allah, the Exalted, as trusting that Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for people is an essential part of faith. If all the wisdoms behind the decrees and commands of Allah, the Exalted, were made manifest to people, then belief would not be so valuable, just like belief in the unseen elements, such as Hell and Paradise, would not be so valuable if a person was shown these unseen things. A muslim must study the Holy Quran and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to firmly understand that everything Allah, the Exalted, decrees and commands is best for the people involved, even if the wisdoms behind them are hidden from them. One should also reflect on their life experiences to understand this reality. How many times have people desired something only to accept later on that is was bad for them? How many times have people disliked something only to accept later on it was good for them? Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

As the children of Israel failed to understand this reality they replied in a disrespectful way to the command of Allah, the Exalted, given on the tongue of Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 67:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "Indeed, Allah commands you to slaughter a cow." They said, "Do you take us in ridicule?" He said, "I seek refuge in Allah from being among the ignorant."”

The Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, made it clear that making jokes that are connected to the commands of Allah, the Exalted, is an ignorant attitude that must be avoided. Mocking or joking about anything that is connected to Allah, the Exalted, can even cause one to lose their faith. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 65-66:

“And if you ask them, they will surely say, "We were only conversing and playing." Say, "Is it Allāh and His verses and His Messenger that you were mocking?" Make no excuse; you have disbelieved [i.e., rejected faith] after your belief. If We pardon one faction of you - We will punish another faction because they were criminals.”

But it is important to note that occasionally joking about non-religious things whereby one avoids all types of sins is acceptable in Islam, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, very occasionally joked in this manner. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1990. It is also important to note that joking excessively in a sinful way does not mean one should adopt a sad and depressed mood. There is a big difference between being cheerful with others and joking excessively.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 67:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "Indeed, Allah commands you to slaughter a cow." They said, "Do you take us in ridicule?" He said, "I seek refuge in Allah from being among the ignorant."”

Behaving ignorantly in the Arabic language also refers to the one who loses control over their emotions. So the reply of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, also indicates the importance of controlling one’s emotions when others are misbehaving towards them. Seeking refuge in Allah, the Exalted, is an excellent way of achieving this. This has also been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3282. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised the angry person to seek refuge with Allah, the Exalted, from the Devil. Generally speaking, one should adopt silence whenever they become emotional in order to avoid committing sins with their words, as words can sometimes have more long term consequences than actions. The emotional person should also adopt an inactive body position in order to avoid lashing out physically towards others. The standing person should sit down and if needed, the one sitting down should lie down. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4782. It is also a good idea for an emotional person to walk away from the situation until they have calmed down. Only then should they approach and deal with the situation according to the teachings of Islam.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 67-68:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "Indeed, Allah commands you to slaughter a cow." They said, "Do you take us in ridicule?" He said, "I seek refuge in Allah from being among the ignorant." They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is."…”

Another aspect of the disrespect shown by the children of Israel towards the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, is that they did not ask him to clarify the command, as if his words were not good enough for them. They insisted that he should ask Allah, the Exalted, for the answer. The Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was well aware of their disrespectful behaviour and therefore informed them from the very beginning that it was Allah, the Exalted, who commanded them to slaughter a cow, even though they should have accepted this command without hesitation even if it came from the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, directly. In addition, they did not even refer to Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord, instead they referred to Him as the Lord of the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him. This misguided attitude can also be adopted by the muslims when they fail to accept the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as their leader and superior whose obedience is obligatory under every circumstance. Some foolish people have attempted to reduce the status of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by ignoring his teachings even though sincerely obeying him has been made obligatory by Allah, the Exalted, in the Holy Quran. Allah, the Exalted, knows best what Holy Quran these misguided people have studied to adopt such a foolish belief. The Holy Quran revealed by Allah, the Exalted, makes the obedience of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, under every circumstance a pillar of faith. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...""

And chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 80:

"He who obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah…"

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 65:

"But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission."

These are just some examples amongst countless others indicating the importance of sincerely obeying the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in every situation.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 67-68:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "Indeed, Allah commands you to slaughter a cow." They said, "Do you take us in ridicule?" He said, "I seek refuge in Allah from being among the ignorant." They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is." [Moses] said, "[Allah] says, 'It is a cow which is neither old nor virgin, but median between that, so do what you are commanded.’”

After clarifying the matter for them, the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, indicated to them the importance of implementing the command of Allah, the Exalted, instead of adopting the misguiding attitude whereby one asks and researches about irrelevant information which only distracts them from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must only enquire about and research the religious knowledge which will aid them in increasing their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These are the things which will be questioned about on Judgement Day therefore one must concentrate on enquiring about and

researching this knowledge only. Diving into irrelevant religious knowledge only distracts one from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and unnecessarily preoccupies their resources. The rightly guided attitude has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3257. It was this rightly guided attitude the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was advising his nation to adopt but they failed to understand and adopt it. Instead, they continued to ask irrelevant questions which only made their life harder. The initial command was to slaughter any cow but as they persisted on asking irrelevant questions, the command became more specific and therefore harder to implement. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 68-71:

“They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is." [Moses] said, "[Allah] says, 'It is a cow which is neither old nor virgin, but median between that, so do what you are commanded.’” They said, "Call upon your Lord to show us what is her color." He said, “He says, 'It is a yellow cow, bright in color - pleasing to the observers.'” They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is. Indeed, [all] cows look alike to us. And indeed we, if Allah wills, will be guided.” He said, "He says, 'It is a cow neither trained to plow the earth nor to irrigate the field, one free from fault with no spot upon her.'" They said, "Now you have come with the truth." So they slaughtered her, but they could hardly do it.”

Even though the children of Israel outwardly showed the desire to be rightly guided by Allah, the Exalted, yet as they failed to sincerely obey Him and the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, they adopted wishful thinking instead of hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Hope in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, is always tied to His obedience. Meaning, the one who strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran

and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is the one who can hope for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, even if they occasionally commit sins. Whereas, persisting in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and believing He will grant mercy and forgiveness is only wishful thinking. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

In addition, it is important to note that the children of Israel were commanded to slaughter the same thing which they previously worshipped namely, a golden calf. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 51:

"And [recall] when We made an appointment with Moses for forty nights. Then you took [for worship] the calf after him [i.e., his departure], while you were wrongdoers."

One of the wisdoms behind this command was to teach them the importance of sacrificing their desires for the pleasure and obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as the cause of them worshipping the golden calf was a desire to lead a life whereby they were free to fulfill all their worldly desires without restrictions. The lifeless golden calf could not give them a code of conduct therefore, they would simply fabricate one which suited their desires. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 148:

“And the people of Moses made, after [his departure], from their ornaments a calf - an image having a lowing sound. Did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor guide them to a way? They took it [for worship], and they were wrongdoers.”

Therefore, slaughtering the cow was a lesson indicating the importance of prioritizing the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, over one’s desires. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of in ways pleasing to oneself or other people, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 68-71:

“They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is." [Moses] said, "[Allah] says, 'It is a cow which is neither old nor virgin, but median between that, so do what you are commanded.’” They said, "Call upon your Lord to show us what is her color." He said, “He says, 'It is a yellow cow, bright in color - pleasing to the observers.'” They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is. Indeed, [all] cows look alike to us. And indeed we, if Allah wills, will be guided.” He said, "He says, 'It is a cow neither trained to plow the earth nor to irrigate the field, one free from fault with no spot upon her.'" They said, "Now you have come with the truth." So they slaughtered her, but they could hardly do it.”

This incident also indicates the importance of strictly adhering to divine teachings and commands instead of charting one's own course, as the latter attitude only leads to trouble. Muslims must adhere strictly to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoid other things, even if they appear to be good actions. The fact is that the more one acts on other things, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance. Acting on other things is the main cause of alien practices entering the lives of muslims, practices taken from other religions. These practices are often given priority over acting on the two sources of guidance which in turn only leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 72:

"And [recall] when you slew a man and disputed over it, but Allāh was to bring out that which you were concealing."

Allah, the Exalted, solved the murder of a man for the children of Israel in order to remind them that everyone will be held accountable for their actions, even if it is a hidden action concealed from other people. Therefore, one must constantly assess their intention, speech and actions in order to ensure they are upright as nothing will remain hidden on the Day of Judgement. The one who judges and rectifies their behaviour in this world will find that their final judgment will be easy. But the one who fails to do this will find that their

intention, speech and actions leads them to destruction. Chapter 101 Al Qari’ah, verses 6-11:

“Then as for one whose scales are heavy [with good deeds]. He will be in a pleasant life. But as for one whose scales are light. His refuge will be an abyss. And what can make you know what that is? It is a Fire, intensely hot.”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 72:

“And [recall] when you slew a man and disputed over it, but Allāh was to bring out that which you were concealing.”

Just like Allah, the Exalted, clarified the truth to them and refuted the false accusations of murder they hurled at each other, one must understand that excuses and blaming others will never be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, quotes the greatest source of misguidance of people, the Devil, when he will address the people who try to escape facing the consequences of their actions by blaming him. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 22:

“And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, "Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you.

But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves…""

If Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that one will not escape facing the consequences of their actions by blaming the Devil, then how will He accept any other excuses? Each person must therefore take responsibility for their intention, speech and actions at all times so that they rectify them before reaching the Day of Judgement when rectifying them will not be possible.

Through solving the murder of the man, Allah, the Exalted, showed the children of Israel another clear miracle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 72-73:

"And [recall] when you slew a man and disputed over it, but Allāh was to bring out that which you were concealing. So We said, "Strike him [i.e., the slain man] with part of it [the slaughtered cow]." Thus does Allāh bring the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you might reason."

Despite witnessing so many clear miracles, many from the children of Israel still possessed weak faith. Allah, the Exalted, showed them another miracle so that through witnessing it they could adopt strong faith. Strong faith is vital to adopt as it encourages one to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, at all times, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In this age, strong

faith is adopted through learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. When one observes the different proofs explained therein of the truthfulness of Islam and how the promises of Allah, the Exalted, have always been fulfilled throughout the ages, a muslim's faith will strengthen.

In addition, it is amazing how Allah, the Exalted, gave life to a dead person through a dead piece of flesh. The same way Allah, the Exalted, created people from nothing, bringing them back after they have died and turned into dust and bones is an easier task. Believing otherwise is simply illogical.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 73:

"…and He shows you His signs that you might reason."

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of being observant in life. One must observe their own life, the lives of others and the universe in a way which allows them to learn lessons from them so that they increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. For example, when one observes those who misuse the blessings they have been granted and how they face countless mental issues, such as anxiety, stress, depression, substance abuse and suicidal tendencies despite having the world at their feet, they must conclude that peace of mind only lies in using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

One must observe the Heavens and the Earth and appreciate the signs placed within them which clearly indicate the reality of the resurrection on Judgement Day. For example, when one observes the day and night, they will clearly see how Allah, the Exalted, gives life through sunlight to the Earth after it experiences a death-like state during the night. Allah, the Exalted, gives life to the dead land through rain and life to a dead seed which is planted in the Earth. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 39:

"And of His signs is that you see the earth stilled, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and grows. Indeed, He who has given it life is the Giver of Life to the dead. Indeed, He is over all things competent."

The sleep wake cycle is a minor resurrection which occurs every day. Sleep is the sister of death, as one loses their senses during sleep, just like they lose it through death. Those who are granted life are given permission to wake up by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 42:

"Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

When one observes the different seasons throughout the year and their effects on crops, plants and trees it clearly indicates the reality of resurrection. During winter time trees shed their leaves and appear dead but during other seasons they are granted life once again.

A muslim must therefore adopt an observing mentality whereby they learn from the signs placed within their lives, the lives of others and the world in order to strengthen their faith in Allah, the Exalted. This in turn will encourage them to increase their sincere obedience to Him, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 73:

"…Thus does Allah bring the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you might reason."

And chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth…"

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 74

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ فَهِىَ كَٱلْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنَ ٱلْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَّقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ ٱلْمَآءُ ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

"Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth, and there are some of them that split open and water comes out, and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do."

The previous passages noted some of the miracles shown to the children of Israel in order to strengthen their faith which in turn should have encouraged them to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. This involved using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in divine teachings. But the hearts of the children of Israel were intoxicated with fulfilling their worldly desires, which was clearly shown when they worshipped a lifeless statue, knowing it could not command them to live by a specific code of conduct, which would allow them to fashion this code of conduct according to their desires. As a result, their spiritual hearts hardened towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which in turn led to them persisting on His disobedience. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3334, that when one commits a sin a black spot is etched on their spiritual heart. The more they sin, the more their spiritual heart becomes encompassed by darkness. This darkness prevents one from benefiting from the light of guidance found within divine teachings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

"*Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder…"*

One must avoid adopting a hardened spiritual heart by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they adopt the positive characteristics discussed therein, such as generosity, patience and gratitude, and avoid the negative characteristics discussed therein also, such as greed, jealousy and pride. When one adopts good characteristics and avoids negative characteristics, their spiritual heart will become soft and pure. This purity will then manifest outwardly on their speech and actions.

Meaning, their speech and actions will be rooted in goodness. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 52. A pure spiritual heart will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who follows in the footsteps of the children of Israel by failing to adopt the good characteristics discussed in divine teachings and instead adopts the negative ones, will find that their spiritual heart becomes hard and impure. This hardness and impurity will then be reflected in their speech and actions. This will cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

The difference between the pure and impure spiritual heart and their consequences has also been indicated in chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 125:

“So whoever Allāh wants to guide - He expands his breast to [contain] Islām; and whoever He wants to send astray - He makes his breast tight and constricted as though he were climbing into the sky. Thus does Allāh place defilement upon those who do not believe.”

The one who actively strives to purify their spiritual heart will be rightly guided but the one who ignores purifying their spiritual heart will be abandoned to the misguided path they have chosen.

Allah, the Exalted, then describes some different types of spiritual hearts that people can adopt. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

“*Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth…”*

Just like rivers can emerge from stones, similarly, the purified spiritual heart leads to the flowing out of good speech and actions. This spiritual heart benefits its bearer and others in religious and worldly matters. The water that bursts out of this spiritual heart could also be referring to divine knowledge,

which descends from the sky, just like rainwater descends from the sky. This would mean that this spiritual heart learns, acts and shares divine knowledge, so that it can be observed in their speech and actions and in the speech and actions of others. This would ensure all of them use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, as indicated earlier, the root of a spiritual heart is gaining and acting on divine knowledge.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

"*Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder…and there are some of them that split open and water comes out…"*

This type of spiritual heart is similar to the previous one, but the difference is that this one does not benefit others as much as the first type of spiritual heart. For example, they may learn and act on divine knowledge but they may not teach others it actively. And the one who possesses this spiritual heart strives less in learning and acting on divine knowledge but the little they do know and learn, they sincerely strive to implement it into their life, which benefits them and others according to their efforts. If one persists on this attitude it is hoped they will eventually adopt the first type of spiritual heart, which is immersed in learning, acting and sharing divine knowledge, so that they use every blessing they possess in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and encourage others to do the same. This is the only path which leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

"*Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder…and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allah…"*

The bearer of the final type of spiritual heart does not necessarily strive in learning and acting on divine knowledge but they do strive to fulfill the minimal obligations and avoid the major prohibitions of Islam. Adhering to this is the minimal standard for every muslim, as the one who fails to do this does not fear Allah, the Exalted, at all. This has been indicated in verse 74. The one who does not adhere to the minimal standard is the one who claims faith with their words but fails to support it through actions. It is feared that the one who behaves in this manner may well leave this world without their faith, which is the greatest loss. This can occur as faith is like a plant which must be nourished by acts of obedience, the minimum actions includes fulfilling the obligations and avoiding the prohibitions. If one fails to nourish their faith, then it may well die, just like a plant dies when it fails to obtain nourishment, such as sunlight and water. One must therefore adhere to the minimal standard at all times but strive to learn and act on divine teachings so that they purify their spiritual heart, step by step, by adopting the positive

characteristics discussed therein and avoid the negative characteristics discussed therein. This gradual progression will ensure they eventually adopt the highest type of spiritual heart. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

“Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth, and there are some of them that split open and water comes out, and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allah…”

The rightly guided spiritual hearts have been explained by Allah, the Exalted, therefore, no muslim has any excuse to avoid striving to purify their spiritual hearts.

As the purity of one’s spiritual heart is mostly hidden, such as one’s intention, Allah, the Exalted, ends the verse by reminding people that He is fully aware of the hidden aspects of one’s spiritual heart, such as their intention and the manifest aspects, such as the outward effects of one’s spiritual heart on their speech and actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 74:

“…And Allah is not unaware of what you do.”

One must therefore aim to obtain a purified spiritual heart, by correcting their hidden intention, so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A sign of this is that they do not demand nor hope for any payback or gratitude from others. They must purify their speech by speaking good or remaining silent. And they must purify their actions by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in divine teachings. The root of all this is adopting a purified spiritual heart by learning and acting on divine knowledge so that they adopt the positive characteristics discussed therein, such as patience and gratitude, and avoid the negative characteristics discussed therein, such as pride and jealousy. This is one of the reasons why it is obligatory on every muslim to obtain Islamic knowledge according to the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. This then makes it clear that ignorance is one of the roots of a hardened spiritual heart and must therefore be avoided. In this digital age where Islamic knowledge is easily accessible, one is left with no choice but to utilize their resources in order to gain and act on Islamic knowledge.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 75-77

۞ أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَن يُؤْمِنُوا۟ لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَـٰمَ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُۥ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

وَإِذَا لَقُوا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ قَالُوٓا۟ ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ قَالُوٓا۟ أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُم بِمَا فَتَحَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَآجُّوكُم بِهِۦ عِندَ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

"Do you covet [the hope, O believers], that they [people of the book] would believe for you while a party of them [their scholars] used to hear the words of Allah and then distort it [the Torah] after they had understood it while they were knowing?

And when they [hypocrites from the people of the book] meet those who believe, they say, "We have believed"; but when they are alone with one another, they say, "Do you talk to them about what Allah has revealed to you so they can argue with you about it before your Lord? Then will you not reason?"

But do they not know that Allah knows what they conceal and what they declare?"

After facing the severe persecution and opposition from the non-muslims of Mecca, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, strongly believed the people of the book living in Medina would readily accept Islam, as they were a people who were following the previous divine scriptures and law. This was one of the strong reasons for migrating to Medina in the first place. The attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, shows the great sincerity they possessed towards others, as they always wished for others what they loved for themselves. Just like they loved being rightly guided by Islam, they also desired this for others. It is important for muslims to adopt this attitude, as sincerity to others is an important aspect of Islam according to the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 196. This is best achieved when one treats others in a way they wish to be treated by others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 75:

"Do you covet [the hope, O believers], that they [people of the book] would believe for you while a party of them [their scholars] used to hear the words of Allah and then distort it [the Torah] after they had understood it while they were knowing?"

Out of love for holding on to what they had obtained, such as wealth and social status, by intentionally misinterpreting their divine teachings, the vast majority of the people of the book rejected and opposed Islam. Their way of life allowed them to fulfill all their worldly desires while maintaining an appearance of righteousness. But as Islam challenged their desires and advocated controlling them according to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, they rejected Islam despite recognizing its truthfulness, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran had

been discussed in their divine scriptures, something which they intentionally misinterpreted and hid from the public. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

Verse 75 also makes it clear that the people of the book were not considered believers by Allah, the Exalted, despite their claim to faith. This indicates the importance of supporting one's verbal declaration of faith with actions rooted in Islamic teachings. Verbal claims without actions have very little value in Islam. The one who verbally claims belief without supporting it with actions is as foolish as the student who hands a blank exam paper back to their teacher while claiming that the knowledge is in their mind and they therefore do not need to write the knowledge down by answering the exam questions. The same way this student would fail so will the person who claims to possess belief in Islam in their spiritual heart yet fails to support this claim with actions. Even though Allah, the Exalted, knows what is in someone's spiritual heart, none the less, He has commanded actualizing faith. He has

made it clear that reward will be granted to people who believe and support this with actions. For example, chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 32:

“The ones whom the angels take in death, [being] good and pure; [the angels] will say, "Peace be upon you. Enter Paradise for what you used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 75:

“Do you covet [the hope, O believers], that they [people of the book] would believe for you while a party of them [their scholars] used to hear the words of Allah and then distort it [the Torah] after they had understood it while they were knowing?”

Despite this behaviour from the majority of the people of the book, Allah, the Exalted, made it clear that not all of them behaved in this manner. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 75:

“Do you covet [the hope, O believers], that they [people of the book] would believe for you while a party of them [their scholars] used to hear the words of Allah and then distort it [the Torah] after they had understood it while they were knowing?”

The few who did not behave in this manner, such as Abdullah Bin Salaam, may Allah be pleased with him, readily accepted Islam when they were presented it, as they adhered sincerely to the teachings of the Torah which preached the coming of Islam.

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of not judging a group of people based on the actions of a few. Sadly, this attitude is often overlooked by muslims who hurl an entire group of people, such as a people from a specific country, into one bucket, just because a group from them behave in an evil way. This is surprising as this is how muslims have always been treated by the media, as the entire muslim nation is grouped together with the minority of misguided muslims who harm innocent people. As muslims have experienced the negative consequences of this attitude, they should be even more eager to avoid treating others in this manner.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 75:

“Do you covet [the hope, O believers], that they [people of the book] would believe for you while a party of them [their scholars] used to hear the words of Allah and then distort it [the Torah] after they had understood it while they were knowing?”

This verse also warns muslims not to behave in this manner in respect to Islamic knowledge. They must not intentionally learn and misinterpret it in order to suit their own desires. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned those who seek Islamic knowledge with the wrong intention, such as showing off, with Hell in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253. One must therefore ensure they only seek and act on Islamic knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and avoid misusing this knowledge in order to gain worldly things, such as social status and wealth. Verse 76 also makes it clear that unintentionally deriving the wrong answer from religious teachings is not considered a sin even though a person should try their utmost to avoid this.

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights the two-face attitude of the hypocrites from the people of the book and how they would share their teachings with the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in order to convince them that they were all on the same side. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 76:

“And when they [hypocrites from the people of the book] meet those who believe, they say, "We have believed"; but when they are alone with one another, they say, "Do you talk to them about what Allah has revealed to you so they can argue with you about it before your Lord? Then will you not reason?””

A two-faced attitude must always be avoided as a person may please different groups of people by their attitude for a limited time but when this time runs out they will be disgraced publicly in both worlds. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 64:

“The hypocrites are apprehensive lest a sūrah be revealed about them, informing them of what is in their hearts. Say, "Mock [as you wish]; indeed, Allāh will expose that which you fear."

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4873, that the person who adopts a two-faced attitude will have two tongues of fire on Judgement Day. Therefore, this attitude must be avoided at all costs. A muslim must adhere to the truth at all times irrespective of who they are dealing with.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 76:

“And when they [hypocrites from the people of the book] meet those who believe, they say, "We have believed"; but when they are alone with one another, they say, "Do you talk to them about what Allah has revealed to you so they can argue with you about it before your Lord? Then will you not reason?””

This verse also warns against bad companionship as the hypocrites from the people of the book failed to sincerely advise each other towards good. One

must always remember that they will be influenced by their companions, whether obviously or subtly and whether positively or negatively. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833. One must therefore ensure they adopt good companions who advise and encourage them towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who fails to adopt good companions will only cause stress and trouble for themself in this world and their bad companions will become a source of trouble for them in the next world also. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

"Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 76:

"And when they [hypocrites from the people of the book] meet those who believe, they say, "We have believed"; but when they are alone with one another, they say, "Do you talk to them about what Allah has revealed to you so they can argue with you about it before your Lord? Then will you not reason?""

These hypocrites foolishly admonished each other about sharing the knowledge found within their divine teachings with the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as they were afraid this would become evidence against them on Judgement Day, as they failed to adhere to these teachings themselves. But there was no need to worry about this as their own intention, speech and behaviour was enough to testify to the fact that they failed to adhere to their divine teachings and instead intentionally misinterpreted them so that they could obtain and fulfil their worldly desires. And their bad intention, speech and behaviour was all known to Allah, the Exalted, even if they attempted to conceal them from people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 77:

"But do they not know that Allah knows what they conceal and what they declare?"

Muslims must therefore avoid following the footsteps of these hypocrites and instead ensure they adopt a good intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A sign of this is that they do not desire nor hope for any gratitude or payback from people. They must ensure they adopt good speech, which involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. This will ensure they avoid the two-faced attitude of the hypocrites mentioned in these verses. They must ensure they adopt good behaviour by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they adopt the good characteristics discussed therein, such as sincerity, generosity, patience and gratitude, and avoid the negative characteristics discussed therein, such as hypocrisy, greed and pride. All of this will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This will lead to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But the one who follows the footsteps of the hypocrites by adopting a bad intention, speech and actions, as they only wish to follow and fulfill their desires by misusing the blessings they have been granted, will face stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 78

وَمِنۡهُمۡ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعۡلَمُونَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ إِلَّآ أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنۡ هُمۡ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ٧٨

“And among them [people of the book] are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture [the Torah and Bible] except [indulging in] wishful thinking, but they are only assuming.”

This verse criticises those people who verbally claim to follow a particular religion yet fail to learn and act on its teachings. Many from the people of the book would blindly recite their divine scriptures unaware of what they taught and advocated, similar to the muslims of today who recite the Holy Quran without understanding its meaning. As a result, these uneducated people from the people of the book would then blindly follow their elders and scholars without understanding the teachings of their divine scriptures. In most cases, this led to their misguidance as many of their elders and scholars intentionally misinterpreted their divine scriptures for the sake of obtaining worldly things, such as wealth and social status. For example, most of them rejected Islam and advised their ignorant follows to reject Islam also even though they clearly recognised its truthfulness as the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 78:

"*And among them [people of the book] are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture [the Torah and Bible]…"*

This verse therefore warns against adopting ignorance by failing to learn and act on divine knowledge as this often leads to blind imitation of others, which in turn often leads to misguidance. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 116:

"And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allāh. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but misjudging."

This is one of the reasons why learning and acting on Islamic knowledge is an obligation on every muslim according to the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224.

A muslim is not expected to understand all the complicated and detailed aspects of Islamic knowledge, such as the complicated aspects of Islamic jurisprudence. But they are expected to learn the fundamental elements of faith discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and are expected to regularly study, learn and act on these two sources of guidance throughout

their lives. This will ensure one does not blindly follow others in all their religious affairs which in turn will reduce the chances of becoming misguided.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 78:

"And among them [people of the book] are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture [the Torah and Bible] except [indulging in] wishful thinking, but they are only assuming."

Ignorance also prevents one from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. How can one use the blessings they were granted correctly when they do not know how to? These ignorant people will then misuse the blessings they have been granted while assuming they are rightly guided, as they claim faith in Allah, the Exalted, through their speech. This attitude will only encourage them to adopt cultural practices and beliefs assuming they are religious practices and beliefs. This will only lead to further misguidance, as many of these practices are rooted in polytheism and the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident when one observes ignorant muslims.

The ignorant from the people of the book assumed that failing to learn and act on divine knowledge and instead learning a few practices from their religion was enough for salvation. They turned their faith into a few empty

practices and did not understand that their faith was meant to affect every intention, word and action they perform. This understanding only occurs when one gains and acts on religious knowledge. Sadly, many Muslims have followed in their footsteps by relying on a few physical acts of worship assuming this is the path of success. When one turns their faith into a few practices and rituals performed in a language they do not understand, they faith no longer becomes a way of life. When the next generation follow in their footsteps it is only a matter of time before they abandon these few practices assuming they are only a part of their culture instead of understanding that their faith is meant to be a way of life. For example, the elders which migrated to western countries held onto their culture in respect to the clothing but the next generation who were born and raised in the west abandoned this way of dressing assuming it was only a cultural practice and not a way of life. The issue with culture and fashion is that they are always changing from generation to generation and if faith is seen as a few cultural practices it too will be abandoned with the passing of time. This is what occurred with the people of the book, the Jews and Christians, also. Once upon a time their churches and synagogues were full of devoted worshippers and seekers of knowledge but when the people abandoned knowledge and only relied on a few practices, the next generation went a step further and even abandoned these few practices and as a result their synagogues and churches became empty.

In addition, those who adopted this mentality amongst the older generation held onto the few practices they learned but due to changes in the general mentality of society, the next generation no longer desire to blindly implement cultural practices and even often question why they should adopt faith and act on these practices. If the older generation are unaware of why they are Muslims, then how can they explain this to the next generation? Ignorance will only encourage the next generation to abandon their faith and the few practices they were taught by their elders and to instead lead a life serving their own desires.

If Muslims fail to change their attitude by studying and acting on Islamic knowledge and encourage the next generation to do the same, then they too will share the fate of the people of the book mentioned in this verse.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 78:

"And among them [people of the book] are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture [the Torah and Bible] except [indulging in] wishful thinking, but they are only assuming."

This also warns of a dangerous consequence of failing to learn and act on divine teachings. The one who adopts this attitude will inevitably believe things about their faith which are simply not true. For example, they may learn some divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, such as the fact He is All Forgiving and All Merciful and as a result they will indulge in wishful thinking while believing they possess hope in His mercy and forgiveness. Meaning, they will persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, while believing He will forgive them, as He is All Forgiving. Even though, Allah, the Exalted, forgives whoever He wants, none the less, He has made it clear that He will not treat the wrongdoer and doer of good equally in this world or in the next, as this would contradict His justice. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 21:

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.”

This wishful thinker believes they are showing respect to Allah, the Exalted, while they are actually indicating He does not judge with justice as they believe He will treat the doer of good equally to the wrongdoer. Hope in Allah, the Exalted, is always tied with His obedience. The one who sincerely strives to obey Him, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him and sincerely repents from the sins they happen to commit is worthy of hoping in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 78:

“And among them [people of the book] are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture [the Torah and Bible] except [indulging in] wishful thinking, but they are only assuming.”

Another misguided belief those who fail to learn and act on Islamic teachings adopt is that they belittle the punishment of the Day of Judgement and Hell. They assume that as they are muslims they will die muslims, which means they will eventually enter Paradise, even if they are punished in Hell first. First of all, leaving this world with faith is not guaranteed and those who persist in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of their ignorance,

may well leave this world without their faith as they failed to nourish their faith with acts of obedience. Faith is like a plant which must be nourished with good actions and just like a plant dies when it does not obtain nourishment, such as water, so may well the faith of a muslim who fails to support their verbal declaration of faith with actions. Secondly, the punishment of the Day of Judgement and Hell is unbearable, even for a moment, let alone many years. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that on the Day of Judgement the one who enjoyed their worldly life the most will be dipped into Hell for a moment and pulled back out. He will be asked if he had experienced anything good in his entire existence to which he will reply in the negative, as Hell is that terrible it destroys the memories and feelings of any enjoyment a person has ever felt. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, verse 4321. This is enough to make it clear that a single moment of Hell is unbearable therefore one must never belittle it as if it is like a worldly prison. In addition, this misguided attitude is the same one adopted by the people of the book who also belittled Hell and as a result Allah, the Exalted, criticised them in the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 80:

“And they say, "Never will the Fire touch us, except for [a few] numbered days." Say, "Have you taken a covenant with Allāh? For Allāh will never break His covenant. Or do you say about Allāh that which you do not know?"”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 78:

“And among them [people of the book] are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture [the Torah and Bible] except [indulging in] wishful thinking, but they are only assuming.”

Another classic misguided assumption adopted by ignorant muslims is that they assume they will be saved on Judgement Day from Hell by the intercession of a holy person, spiritual guide and teacher, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even though they persisted on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact none the less, many muslims will still enter Hell and as mentioned earlier, a moment in Hell is unbearable. In addition, these ignorant people fail to understand that the same way the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will intercede for muslims, he will also testify against those who abandoned learning and acting on the Holy Quran. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 30:

“And the Messenger has said, "O my Lord, indeed my people have taken this Qur’ān as [a thing] abandoned."”

One can only abandon something after they have accepted and took it. Therefore, this obviously refers to the muslims as they are the ones who took the Holy Quran from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It does not take a scholar to determine what will occur to the person who the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, testifies against on Judgement Day.

These ignorant people believe that as they are from the nation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will be forgiven irrespective of their actions. This was the same misguided attitude adopted by the people of the book which Allah, the Exalted, criticized in the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 18:

"But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of Allāh and His beloved." Say, "Then why does He punish you for your sins?" Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills…"

An ignorant person who fails to learn and act on Islamic knowledge will assume that the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, will be changed for them. Meaning, even though He has punished and will punish the former nations which persistently disobeyed Him, the ignorant person believes this tradition will be changed for them. But they fail to understand that the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, does not change for anyone or any nation. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

"…Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples? But you will never find in the way [i.e., established method] of Allāh any change, and you will never find in the way of Allāh any alteration."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 78:

“And among them [people of the book] are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture [the Torah and Bible] except [indulging in] wishful thinking, but they are only assuming.”

Another classic misguided assumption adopted by ignorant muslims is that they assume they will be saved on Judgement Day from Hell simply because they claim love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, even though they fail to prove this love through actions by learning and acting on his traditions. They fail to remember that even the previous nations claim to love their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, yet they will not be with them on Judgement Day as they failed to practically follow in their footsteps. The same outcome will occur to the muslims who fail to practically follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been indicated in many verses, such as chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 69:

“And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allāh has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions.”

This verse makes it clear that this outcome is only for those who practically obey Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not for those who only claim love through their words.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 78:

“And among them [people of the book] are unlettered ones who do not know the Scripture [the Torah and Bible] except [indulging in] wishful thinking, but they are only assuming.”

To conclude, the only way one can avoid being misguided by others and adopting wishful thinking and false beliefs about Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the afterlife is by learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But the one who fails to behave in this manner and instead adopts ignorance as they way, will misuse the blessings they have been granted. This will lead to stress and difficulties in this world and then they will encounter difficulties and trouble in the hereafter which they never realized or expected because of their ignorance. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

And chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 47:

"And if those who did wrong had all that is in the earth entirely and the like of it with it, they would [attempt to] ransom themselves thereby from the worst of the punishment on the Day of Resurrection. And there will appear to them from Allāh that which they had not taken into account."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 79-82

فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَٰذَا مِنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا۟ بِهِۦ ثَمَنًا
قَلِيلًا ۖ فَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَّهُم مِّمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

وَقَالُوا۟ لَن تَمَسَّنَا ٱلنَّارُ إِلَّآ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَةً ۚ قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَن يُخْلِفَ
ٱللَّهُ عَهْدَهُۥٓ ۖ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

بَلَىٰ مَن كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَٰطَتْ بِهِۦ خَطِيٓـَٔتُهُۥ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْجَنَّةِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

“So woe to those who write the "scripture" with their own hands, then say, "This is from Allah," in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.

And they [the people of the book] say, "Never will the Fire touch us, except for [a few] numbered days." Say, "Have you taken a covenant with Allah? For Allah will never break His covenant. Or do you say about Allah that which you do not know?”

Yes, [on the contrary], whoever earns evil and his sin has encompassed him - those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.

But they who believe and do righteous deeds - those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally.”

Allah, the Exalted, criticizes the people of the book who intentionally altered and misinterpreted their divine scriptures in order to obtain worldly things, such as wealth and leadership. For example, they would take bribes from the rich in order to alter divine law so that they were granted concessions to commit sins through fulfilling their worldly desires. They even altered the description of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran mentioned in their divine scriptures in order to prevent their blind followers from accepting Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 79:

"*So woe to those who write the "scripture" with their own hands, then say, "This is from Allah," in order to exchange it for a small price…"*

But Allah, the Exalted, warns them that no matter what worldly things they obtain they will be small compared to what they would have obtained if they sincerely obeyed Allah, the Exalted, by strictly adhering to their divine scriptures. The peace of mind and success in both worlds granted to those who behave correctly is like an ocean compared to the drop one can obtain through compromising on their faith. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

In addition, the very worldly things one obtains through compromising on their faith in this way will become a source of stress, misery and depression for them, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the effect worldly blessings have on their bearer and He alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind. This is the reason one will often observe those drowned in worldly luxuries to be the people who suffer more mental issues such as anxiety, depression and suicidal tendencies than anyone else. This clearly indicates the without peace of mind all worldly blessings and luxuries are paltry, just like verse 79 states. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind

while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

This worldly and hereafter punishment for those who compromise on divine teachings by intentionally misinterpreting them thereby granting themselves and others the concessions to misuse the blessings they have been granted has been indicated at the end of verse 79. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 79:

"…Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn."

A curse removes one from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which prevents them from obtaining peace of mind and success in either this world or the next irrespective of what worldly things they happen to obtain. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, that gaining Islamic knowledge for the sake of worldly things, such as showing off to others will cause one to enter Hell.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 79:

“So woe to those who write the "scripture" with their own hands, then say, "This is from Allāh," in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.”

A branch of this attitude is when so-called Islamic scholars advocate actions which are not rooted in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to amass a following, while claiming that what they advocate is from Allah, the Exalted. As a result, their ignorant followers hold onto these practices believing they are from Allah, the Exalted, and take these scholars as their spiritual leaders whose obedience under all situations is mandatory. Muslims must avoid these types of people and instead learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoid all other actions, even if they appear to be good deeds, as the more one acts on other things the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

The attitude descripted in verse 79 is also adopted by the con artists who claim to solve the worldly problems of people through religious spiritual exercises for a fee. They offer spiritual exercises claiming they are from Allah, the Exalted, even though He nor His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prescribed them. These people must be avoided at all costs as they only encourage muslims to lose trust in Allah, the Exalted, and as they take muslims away from the teachings of the Holy Quran and

the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which leads to misguidance. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 79:

“So woe to those who write the "scripture" with their own hands, then say, "This is from Allāh," in order to exchange it for a small price. Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they earn.”

One of the reasons why Allah, the Exalted, criticizes this attitude heavily is due to the fact that it leads to the misguidance of other people. Adopting a misguiding attitude is bad enough but it becomes much worse in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted, when one’s actions leads to the misguidance of others. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned that the one who misguides others will incur the same sin of each of their misguided followers. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674. Therefore, one must ensure they learn, act and advise others to strictly adhere to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at all times.

Allah, the Exalted, then explains why many scholars from the people of the book intentionally edited and misinterpreted their divine scriptures. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 80:

“*And they [the people of the book] say, "Never will the Fire touch us, except for [a few] numbered days."…”*

They deluded themselves through their wishful thinking when they assumed that they were the favorites of Allah, the Exalted, and as a result He would either pardon them outright for their sins or subject them to a very mild punishment. These outcomes therefore made editing and misinterpreting their divine scriptures for the sake of gaining worldly things, such as wealth and leadership, worth it, just like a thief who plans to steal something valuable believing the risk is worth it, even if they get caught and are sent to prison. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 18:

"But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of Allāh and His beloved." Say, "Then why does He punish you for your sins?" Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills…"

But Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that wishful thinking has no value in His sight and the one who persists on disobeying Him will face the consequences of their actions. In addition, their attitude was nothing but a disrespect to Allah, the Exalted, as they believed He would treat the doer of good and the wrongdoer equally on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 21:

"Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge."

The people of the book believed He would punish others for their sins but spare them. As a result, they attributed injustice to Allah, the Exalted, which in itself is a grave sin. This has been indicated at the end of verse 80. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 80:

“And they [the people of the book] say, "Never will the Fire touch us, except for [a few] numbered days." Say, "Have you taken a covenant with Allah? For Allah will never break His covenant. Or do you say about Allah that which you do not know?””

Muslims must therefore avoid the attitude of intentionally misinterpreting the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to gain worldly things, such as wealth and leadership. Sadly, many muslims have followed in the footsteps of the people of the book by claiming they are the favorites of Allah, the Exalted, as they belong to the nation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As a result, they adopt wishful thinking, just like the people of the book, by believing they will be pardoned or subjected to a mild punishment for ignoring the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which in turn leads to misusing the blessings they have been granted. They fail to understand that even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact, yet many muslims will still go to Hell. This has been confirmed in the Hadiths which discuss his intercession on Judgement Day, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has

warned that on the Day of Judgement the one who enjoyed their worldly life the most will be dipped into Hell for a moment and pulled back out. He will be asked if he had experienced anything good in his entire existence to which he will reply in the negative, as Hell is that terrible it destroys the memories and feelings of any enjoyment a person has ever felt. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, verse 4321. This clearly shows that even a moment in Hell is unbearable therefore, one should not assume the punishment given to them in Hell will be a mild one.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes His longstanding tradition clear to all nations, which clearly eliminates the wishful thinking attitude many have adopted. This tradition will not be changed for any person or nation, as this would challenge the justice of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 81-82:

"Yes, [on the contrary], whoever earns evil and his sin has encompassed him - those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally. But they who believe and do righteous deeds - those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally."

One being encompassed by their sins occurs when one persists on their sinful conduct without attempting to sincerely repent from it. Sincere repentance includes feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, or anyone else who has been wronged, as long as this does not make the situation worse, promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. The one who sincerely repents will not be

encompassed by their sins, only the one who boldly persists on their disobedience of Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, also makes clear that success in this world or the next is not possible without actualizing one’s faith by performing righteous deeds, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Verbally claiming faith without supporting it with actions will not lead to peace of mind and success in either this world or the next. In fact, the one who fails to actualize their faith runs the risk of leaving this world without their faith, which is the greatest loss. This can occur as one’s faith is like a plant which must be nourished with good deeds. The same way a plant will die when it fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, so may well the faith of a person who fails to nourish it with good deeds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 82:

“But they who believe and do righteous deeds - those are the companions of Paradise; they will abide therein eternally.”

To conclude, one must avoid misinterpreting divine teachings in order to suit their desires. They must not cherry pick which divine commands and prohibitions to act on and which ones to ignore according to their desires, as this is a form of misinterpreting divine teachings. They must avoid adopting wishful thinking by assuming they can ignore obeying Allah, the Exalted, yet achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. This attitude only leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Instead, they must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This attitude leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 83

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا ٱللَّهَ وَبِٱلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ
وَٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينِ وَقُولُوا۟ لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُوا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ ثُمَّ
تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنكُمْ وَأَنتُم مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

“And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], "Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good and to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give zakah." Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing.”

Allah, the Exalted, reminded the people of the book living in Medina, and by extension the muslim nation, of some of the main practical elements of faith in Allah, the Exalted, which needed to be fulfilled, as practical actions are the proof of one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, and they are a means of maintaining and strengthening one's belief. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"*And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them]…"*

Faith is like a plant which must be nourished with physical acts of obedience. Just like a plant will die if it fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, so may well the faith of a person who fails to nourish their faith with actions.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"*And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], "Do not worship except Allah…""*

Worshipping only Allah, the Exalted, refers to sincerely obeying Him by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in divine teachings. This includes adopting a good intention whereby one only aims to please Allah, the Exalted, and therefore desires no gratitude or

payback from people. It includes speaking what is good or remaining silent also. One must never associate partners with Allah, the Exalted, by placing their desires or the desires and pleasure of others above His commands and pleasure. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire…”

In this age, sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, cannot be achieved unless one strictly adheres to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid all others actions taken from other sources, even if they appear to be good deeds, as the more one acts on these sources the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter or action which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

It is important to note that the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, does not mean one must be perfect. Humans are prone to error, therefore being perfect has never been a demand of Allah, the Exalted. People are expected to sincerely obey Him and sincerely repent whenever they happen to commit sins. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

"…so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness…"

Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone else who has been wronged, as long as this does not lead to further trouble, promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

After discussing the main principle of faith, the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, the verse then mentions the importance of treating one's parents with the utmost respect and care. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"…*Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good…"*

One can understand the importance of treating their parents with the utmost care seeing as it has been placed second only to the worship of Allah, the Exalted. This occurs many times throughout the Holy Quran. One must therefore ensure they treat their parents according to the teachings of Islam with respect and good behaviour. This also applies even if one's parent is a non-muslim. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2325. In addition, verse 83 also makes this point as it does not command one to only treat their muslim parents kindly. This is best achieved when one treats their parent how they desire to be treated by their own children.

It is important to note that the Holy Quran does not command total obedience of one's parents, as they may well command their child to disobey Allah, the Exalted. Total obedience is only for Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as the latter will only command the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, parents must not misinterpret the teachings of Islam by claiming that their children must show them total obedience and submission under every situation. Sadly, this attitude amongst muslim parents has become quite widespread as they adopted the cultural practices of other religions which equate the total obedience towards parents with the total obedience one shows to their God. Children are permitted to disagree with their parents, even in matters which are lawful in Islam, but they must maintain respect through their speech and actions towards their parent at all times.

Finally, a muslim must strive to be a good child according to the standard set by Allah, the Exalted, not the standard set by their parents, relatives or society. The standards of people, especially when defining a good child, is often incorrect. Therefore, a muslim must not bother with the standard set by people nor should they take notice of those who label them a bad child. Instead, they must adhere to the teachings of Islam in respect to how one must treat their parent and seek reward from Allah, the Exalted, for their conduct, even if their parents or other people are displeased with them. One must seek the validation and approval of Allah, the Exalted, alone, not the validation of approval of people, such as their parents. The incorrect attitude will only cause one to become insincere to Allah, the Exalted, and may even encourage them to disobey Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain the approval and validation of their parents. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 8:

"And We have enjoined upon man goodness to parents. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them…"

Allah, the Exalted, then encourages the good treatment of one's relatives. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"…*and to parents do good and to relatives…"*

Allah, the Exalted, always gives all-encompassing advice within the Holy Quran. In this case, Allah, the Exalted, often urges the kind treatment of one's relatives within the Holy Quran as acting on this single advice alone would ensure prosperity, peace and justice in society. If each person treated their relatives kindly no other aid from an outside source would ever be required. This would ensure each member of every family unit is treated with kindness, which in turn would have a positive effect on the entire society.

One must aid their relatives in anything which is praiseworthy in Islam and warn them against anything which is blameworthy. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

Sadly, many muslims today ignore this advice and instead aid others according to their relationship with them, irrespective of if the thing they are aiding them in is good or bad. A muslim must adhere to the sequence of verse 83 and only aid their relatives in things which are directly connected to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, 83:

"…*Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good and to relatives…"*

One must aid their relatives according to their means, which includes emotional, physical and financial support. This is best achieved when one treats others how they desire other people to treat them. Again, one must not pay much notice to the standard and definition of a good relative defined by people, as their standard and definition often contradicts the definition and standard set by Islam. Instead, one must fulfill the rights of their relatives according to the teachings of Islam for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of whether they are considered a good relative by their relatives or not. Finally, a muslim must never sever ties with their relatives for worldly reasons, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984, that the one who severs ties with their relatives for worldly reasons will not enter Paradise. In addition, even though a muslim can cut off ties with their relative over religious reasons, none the less, it is best to maintain ties with their relative by aiding them in things which are good and warning them in things which

are bad, as this may encourage their relative to sincerely repent from their misguidance.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"…*and to parents do good and to relatives, orphans, and the needy…"*

Orphans are often mentioned in Islamic teachings as they are often deprived of their rights because of their social weakness. Therefore, a muslim must ensure they aid those who are considered socially weak in society, such as orphans and widows, according to their means. Sponsoring orphans and widows has become extremely easy in this day and age as one can set this up online within a few minutes. And the sponsorship amount is often less than their monthly phone bill. Therefore, muslims must not ignore this vital part of Islam as it leads to the continuous support of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the one who takes care of an orphan will obtain his closeness in Paradise. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6005. Finally, the one who takes care of the needy, such as a widow, will be granted the same reward as the one who prays all night and fasts every day. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6006. Therefore, the one who finds it difficult to perform voluntary good deeds, such as the voluntary night prayer and voluntary fasts, should act on this Hadith in order to achieve this reward with minimal effort.

It is important to note that one should always remember that whatever means they possess, such as wealth, has been granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, as a loan and not as a gift. A loan must be repaid to its owner. The way one repays the loan granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, is by using them in ways pleasing to Him. Therefore, the one who aids the needy is only repaying the debt they owe Allah, the Exalted. When one remembers this it will prevent them from behaving as if they are doing a favor to Allah, the Exalted, or the needy person. In reality, Allah, the Exalted, favored them by granting them worldly blessings and by granting them an opportunity to gain countless reward by aiding the needy. The needy person has done the donor a favor by accepting their help. If every needy person rejected the aid of others then how will one obtain the reward mentioned in divine teachings? Remembering these points will prevent one from destroying their reward by adopting the incorrect attitude.

Finally, aiding the needy includes fulfilling any lawful need a person may have. This includes emotional, physical and financial needs. Therefore, no muslim, irrespective of how little wealth they possess, can excuse themself from acting on this verse.

The next part of verse 83 highlights the importance of controlling one’s speech so that they only speak what is good and beneficial. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"…*And speak to people good [words]…"*

One must remember that speech can be split into three types. The first type is evil speech which must be avoided at all costs, as a single evil word is enough to cause one to plunge into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2314. The second type is vain and useless speech. Even though this type is not considered a sin or a good deed, none the less, one must understand that the first step to evil speech is often vain speech. For example, vain speech often leads to backbiting and slander. In addition, vain speech will be a great regret for a person on Judgement Day as it is a great waste of time, especially when they observe the reward given to those who avoided vain speech and instead spoke good words. The final type of speech is good words in respect to worldly and religious matters. One can avoid the first two types of speech by simply speaking what is good or remaining silent. This will ensure they are rewarded for their silence also. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176. One must gently command good and warn others against evil and sincerely advise them in religious and worldly matters. Gentleness in speech is important as one may say the correct thing to others but as they do so in a harsh way they often push them further away from the right path. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters. Finally, one can fulfil this verse by speaking about others in a way they desire people to talk about them, whether in their presence or absence.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

“*…and establish prayer…”*

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling them with their full conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. Establishing the obligatory prayers is often repeated in the Holy Quran as it is the most important practical proof of one’s faith in Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as the daily prayers are all spread out, they act as a constant reminder of the Day of Judgement and practically preparing for it, as each stage of the obligatory prayer is connected to Judgement Day. When one stands up right, this is how they will stand in front of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verses 4-6:

“Do they not think that they will be resurrected. For a tremendous Day The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?”

When they bow, it reminds them of the many people who will be criticized on Judgement Day for not bowing to Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. Chapter 77 Al Mursalat, verse 48:

“And when it is said to them, "Bow [in prayer]," they do not bow.”

This criticism also includes not practically submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of one's life. When one prostrates in the prayer, it reminds them of how people will be invited to prostrate to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. But those who did not prostrate correctly to Him during their lives on Earth will not be able to do this on Judgement Day. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verses 42-43:

"On the Day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so. Their eyes humbled, humiliation will cover them. And they used to be invited to prostration while they were sound."

When one sits on their knees in the prayer, it reminds them of how they will be sitting in this position in front of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement, fearing their final judgement. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 28:

"And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do.""

The one who prays with these elements in mind will establish their prayers correctly. This in turn will ensure they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in between the prayers. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

"…Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing…"

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions the importance of the obligatory charity. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"…*and give zakah…"*

The obligatory charity is only a tiny portion of one's overall income and is only given when one possesses a fixed amount. One of the aims of donating the obligatory charity is that it reminds a muslim that the wealth they possess does not belong to them, otherwise they would be free to spend it how they wished. The wealth was created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and therefore must be used according to His pleasure. In fact, every blessing one possesses is only a loan which must be repaid to its rightful Owner, Allah, the Exalted. This is achieved when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who fails to understand this truth and instead behaves as if the blessings they were granted, such as their

wealth, belongs to them and therefore refrains from donating the obligatory charity, will face a penalty, just like the one who fails to repay a worldly loan faces a penalty. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on Judgement Day. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

"And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection…"

In this world, the very wealth they fail to donate the obligatory charity on will become a source of their stress and misery, as they failed to remember that Allah, the Exalted, has a right over the blessings He granted them. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Verse 83 also indicates a very important principle which is often overlooked by muslims. After mentioning the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, the obligatory prayers are mentioned towards the end of the verse while the things which are connected to how people interact with others are mentioned before it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"*And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], "Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good and to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give zakah." …"*

Many muslims strive hard to fulfill their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, yet often neglect their duties towards the creation believing this attitude is enough to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. The truth is that fulfilling the rights of the creation is an important aspect of fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, one cannot fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, until they fulfill the rights of people. The one who fails to fulfill the rights of people and instead wrongs them will face justice on Judgement Day. They will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may well cause them to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Allah, the Exalted, concludes the main verse under discussion by reminding the people of the book living in Medina and the muslim nation that they must avoid following in the footsteps of the majority of the children of Israel who

failed to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and the rights of the creation. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"…Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing."

Generally speaking, this verse reminds muslims not to throw all people from a particular group into the same bucket. Allah, the Exalted, specifically mentions that not all of the children of Isarel disobeyed Him. One must avoid this negative behaviour as it leads to sins such as racism, slander and looking down upon others.

In addition, Allah, the Exalted, did not state that the children of Israel disbelieved in Him. They only refused to practically prove their faith in Allah, the Exalted, through the actions mentioned in verse 83. This further indicates the importance of proving one's verbal declaration of faith in Allah, the Exalted, with actions, as words without actions have very little value in Islam.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"…Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing."

Allah, the Exalted, warned the people of the book living in Medina to avoid following in their ancestors footsteps and instead accept Islam as its truthfulness was clear to them, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran had been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

But the majority of the people of the book still refused to accept the truth and prove their claim to faith through actions, as accepting Islam would mean they would have to control their worldly desires and use the worldly blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This way of life they simply could not accept.

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], "Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good and to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give zakah." Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing."

This verse also indicates the importance of understanding that faith in Allah, the Exalted, and the core actions associated with it have always been the same since the dawn of time. Meaning, Islam is not a new religion, it is the same religion brought to the people of every generation by their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and has been finalized by the message brought by the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The people of the book living in Medina should have therefore

responded immediately to Islam, as it was not a new religion but a final and unedited version of the faith they had in Allah, the Exalted. But due to their love for obtaining worldly things by compromising on their religious teachings, many from the people of the book rejected Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"…Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing."

As the core actions linked to faith in Allah, the Exalted, has always been the same, muslims should be motivated into proving their verbal declaration of faith in Allah, the Exalted, through acts of obedience, as they have not been commanded to do something different from every generation that have preceded them.

To conclude, muslims must avoid following in the footsteps of the children of Israel and instead fulfill the promise of sincerely and practically obeying Allah, the Exalted, when they accepted Islam as their faith. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"*And [recall] when We took the covenant from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], "Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good*

and to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give zakah."…"

This, in turn, leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But the one who fails to practically support their verbal declaration of faith in Allah, the Exalted, through actions, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, will fail to fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 83:

"…*Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing."*

As a result, the very blessings they have been granted will become a source of stress, misery and anxiety for them in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

The difference between the two attitudes and outcome is quite evident if one reflects over the people in this world who use the worldly blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and those who do not.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 84-86

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَآءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنفُسَكُم مِّن دِيَٰرِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ
وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾

ثُمَّ أَنتُمْ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقًا مِّنكُم مِّن دِيَٰرِهِمْ تَظَٰهَرُونَ
عَلَيْهِم بِٱلْإِثْمِ وَٱلْعُدْوَٰنِ وَإِن يَأْتُوكُمْ أُسَٰرَىٰ تُفَٰدُوهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ
أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَآءُ مَن يَفْعَلُ ذَٰلِكَ مِنكُمْ
إِلَّا خِزْىٌ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَيَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰٓ أَشَدِّ ٱلْعَذَابِ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾

أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱشْتَرَوُا۟ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا بِٱلْءَاخِرَةِ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ ٱلْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

“And [recall] when We took your [children of Israel] covenant, [saying], "Do not shed your [i.e., each other's] blood or evict one another from your homes." Then you acknowledged [this] while you were witnessing.

Then, you are those [same ones who are] killing one another and evicting a party of your people from their homes, cooperating against them in sin and aggression. And if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, although their eviction was forbidden to you. So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

Those are the ones who have bought the life of this world [in exchange] for the Hereafter, so the punishment will not be lightened for them, nor will they be aided.”

Allah, the Exalted, continues to remind the people of the book, and by extension the muslim nation, of the promise of sincerely obeying Him, which they were duty bound to fulfill, just like their ancestors, the children of Israel, were duty bound to fulfil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 84:

“And [recall] when We took your [children of Israel] covenant, [saying], "Do not shed your [i.e., each other's] blood or evict one another from your homes." Then you acknowledged [this] while you were witnessing.”

This verse is phrased in a way which means killing oneself. This indicates a person must honour the life of others just like they desire people to honour their life, as one must behave as if harming others is like harming themself. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the muslim nation is like one body. If any part of the body is sick, the rest of the body shares in its pain. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6586. This attitude must be adopted towards muslims and non-muslims, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, clearly defined a true muslim and believer as the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from a person and their possessions. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. In addition, the Holy Quran has made it clear that the killing of one innocent person will be treated as if the entire mankind was killed. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 32:

“…We decreed upon the Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely…”

As harming others is against the conduct of a muslim can one imagine how far away one must be from real belief in Allah, the Exalted, if they kill another without a legal right?

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 84:

“And [recall] when We took your [children of Israel] covenant, [saying], "Do not shed your [i.e., each other's] blood or evict one another from your homes." Then you acknowledged [this] while you were witnessing.”

The end of this verse also makes it clear that verbal declaration of belief in Allah, the Exalted, is not good enough until one supports it with actions of obedience. Faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience. Just like a plant will die if it does not obtain nourishment, such as water, so may well the faith of a person who fails to nourish their faith with acts of obedience. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In addition, acts of obedience are the proof which Allah, the Exalted, demands from those who claim faith in Him. Therefore, words without actions have little weight in Islam. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 39:

“And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives.”

The children of Israel and their descendants living in Medina during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, promised to uphold these commands yet they repeatedly broke their promise. For the sake of worldly things, such as wealth and leadership, they would kill their own people and evict them from their homes. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 84-85:

“And [recall] when We took your [children of Israel] covenant, [saying], "Do not shed your [i.e., each other's] blood or evict one another from your homes." Then you acknowledged [this] while you were witnessing. Then, you are those [same ones who are] killing one another and evicting a party of your people from their homes, cooperating against them in sin and aggression…”

Muslims must avoid behaving in this manner and instead cooperate with others in what is good and warn them from things which are bad. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 2:

“…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…”

A muslim must never observe who is doing something but observe what they are doing before aiding them. Sadly, many muslims fail to fulfill this duty correctly and instead help others out of blind loyalty to them even if it leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. One must always remember that the very people they aim to please by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, will become a source of stress for them in both worlds, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls whether worldly things, such as relatives, become a source of peace for a person or a source of stress. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

"Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous."

The strange attitude of the people of the book is then mentioned. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 85:

"*Then, you are those [same ones who are] killing one another and evicting a party of your people from their homes, cooperating against them in sin and aggression. And if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, although their eviction was forbidden to you. So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part?..."*

After transgressing and fighting against their own people, they would then purchase their freedom after they became prisoners of war. They claimed

that purchasing their freedom was a duty on them according to the teachings of the Torah, even though the same Torah commanded them not to fight each other in the first place. The frightening thing about their attitude of cherry picking which commands to follow and which ones to ignore has been described as believing in parts of the Torah and disbelieving in others parts. Meaning, Allah, the Exalted, did not state that they acted on parts of the Torah and ignored other parts which contradicted their desires instead, He described their attitude has disbelief. Sadly, this attitude has become quite widespread amongst muslims who also cherry pick what parts of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to act on and which to ignore so that they are free to fulfill their worldly desires. According to verse 85, this attitude is connected to disbelief not just the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 85:

"…*So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part?...*"

Allah, the Exalted, then warns the people of the book, and by extension the muslim nation, that whoever adopts a cherry picking attitude towards divine teachings will find that every worldly blessing they obtain through this attitude, such as wealth, will become a source of misery, stress and anxiety for them in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 85:

"…Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment…"

This is because they intentionally forgot and ignored the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

One must never be fooled into believing that just because they are not punished immediately or in an obvious way, when they adopt a cherry picking attitude towards divine teachings, that they have escaped the consequences. Everything they do has been recorded and they will undoubtedly face the consequences of their actions in both worlds. This is quite evident when one turns the pages of history and observes those who behaved in this manner and the disgraceful outcome they faced in both this world and the next. The punishment of Allah, the Exalted, in this world is often subtle and not obvious, such as the worldly things one has obtained through disobeying Allah, the Exalted, becoming a source of stress and misery for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 85:

"…And Allah is not unaware of what you do."

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that the one who cherry picks which divine teachings to follow and which ones to ignore only behaves in this manner so that they can fulfill their worldly desires unchecked which involves misusing the blessings they have been granted and obtaining the worldly things they desire, such as wealth and leadership. As a result of this attitude, this cherry picker, has prioritized their worldly desires and worldly gain over the peace of mind one can obtain in both worlds through sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 86:

"Those are the ones who have bought the life of this world [in exchange] for the Hereafter…"

This is a foolish transaction, as they have prioritized the temporal, polluted and fleeting worldly things over the permanent and uncontaminated peace of mind one achieves in both worlds when they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

As a result of their poor choice, the very worldly things they have obtained through their cherry picking attitude will become a source of stress, anxiety and depression for them. With the passing of time, this punishment will only increase yet they will be unaware of why they possess poor mental health even though they have the world in their hands. As a result, they will blame the people and things around them, which will result in them breaking their ties with the few decent people in their lives. This will only increase their mental issues. No counsellor, worldly friend or thing will be able to aid them unless they sincerely repent. But if they fail to repent, then the horrors of what they will face in the hereafter are beyond words to describe. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 86:

“…so the punishment will not be lightened for them, nor will they be aided.”

One must therefore avoid this outcome by avoiding cherry picking from divine teachings and instead strive to submit completely to the teachings of Islam, even if they fail to understand the wisdoms behind some of these teachings. One must approach the teachings of Islam and implementing them just like they accept the advice of a medical doctor when they prescribe them bitter medicine and a strict diet plan. The same way a wise person accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor despite the fact that it clearly challenges their desires knowing it is best for them, one must accept and act on the teachings of Islam knowing it is best for them in this world and the next. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways

pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 87

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ بِٱلرُّسُلِ وَءَاتَيْنَا عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ
وَأَيَّدْنَٰهُ بِرُوحِ ٱلْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَآءَكُمْ رَسُولٌۢ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰٓ أَنفُسُكُمُ ٱسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ
وَفَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

"And We did certainly give Moses the Scripture [the Torah] and followed up after him with messengers. And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs and supported him with the Pure Spirit [the angel Gabriel]. But is it [not] that every time a messenger came to you, [O Children of Israel], with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant? And a party [of messengers] you denied and another party you kill[ed]."

Allah, the Exalted, has always sent Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, with divine revelation so that they guide mankind to fulfilling the purpose of their creation. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship [obey] Me.”

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in divine teachings. If a person abandons this divine code of conduct and instead produces and follows a code of conduct which is based on their desires and therefore misuses the blessings they have been granted, then there is not much difference between them and an animal. In fact, they are worse than animals, as animals do not possess the higher level intelligence to follow the divine code of conduct which has been granted to mankind. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 179:

“…Those are like livestock; rather, they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless.”

The divine code of conduct gives people a purposeful and meaningful life. Without this code of conduct a person will waste their life and the resources they have been granted in pointless ways. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 87:

“And We did certainly give Moses the Scripture [i.e., the Torah] and followed up after him with messengers. And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs and supported him with the Pure Spirit [the angel Gabriel]…”

Allah, the Exalted, granted every Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, clear proofs in the form of divine knowledge and miracles which supported their mission to guide their people to peace and success in both worlds. In this age, the clear proofs and miracles are the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In order for one to strengthen their faith so that they remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, they must study and act upon these clear proofs. But the muslim who fails to do this will find it difficult to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, because their faith in Him and their accountability on Judgement Day is weak.

Allah, the Exalted, then explains the root cause of people denying and failing to practically follow the divine code of conduct brought to them by the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 87:

“…But is it [not] that every time a messenger came to you, [O Children of Israel], with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant?...”

The root of cause of denying and failing to practically follow divine guidance is the fact that it often challenges and contradicts the worldly desires of people. The children of Israel were just another group from many generations who behaved in this manner as they could not accept allowing divine guidance to moderate their worldly desires. They instead only wanted to unleash their worldly desires by misusing the blessings they had been granted by Allah, the Exalted. The desire to hold onto one's way of life which allows them to fulfil their worldly desires can be so strong that it encourages one to behave arrogantly towards the clear truth. Arrogance is therefore when one denies the truth simply because it contradicts their desires. A muslim must avoid this attitude in both worldly and religious matters as right guidance cannot be obtained when one rejects the truth. The desire to hold onto one's way of life, which is rooted in satisfying their worldly desires, can even cause one to oppress and harm others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 87:

"…But is it [not] that every time a messenger came to you, [O Children of Israel], with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant? And a party [of messengers] you denied and another party you killed."

The non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book living in Medina both clearly recognized the truthfulness of Islam yet they denied it as it challenged their desires. The non-muslims of Mecca knew the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for 40 years prior to him announcing Prophethood and fully believed he was nothing but trustworthy and honest. They were masters of the Arabic language and full well knew the Holy Quran did not come from any creature. And the people of the book recognized the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessings be upon him, as they both had been described in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

Both the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book followed in the footsteps of the children of Israel by persistently harming and opposing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, all because they did not want to give up their fabricated lifestyle and code of conduct which allowed them to fulfil their worldly desires by misusing the blessings they had been granted by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 87:

“…But is it [not] that every time a messenger came to you, [O Children of Israel], with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant? And a party [of messengers] you denied and another party you killed.”

The fact that the most beloved of slaves to Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were denied and persecuted indicates the importance of understanding an important fact. This world is a place of test and trials therefore, every person will be tested in it, one way or another. In fact, as indicated by this verse, the more one sincerely strives to obey Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be tested, such as facing criticism from the people around them. A muslim must learn and adopt the attitude of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, who always remained steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, despite the opposition they faced, and how ultimate victory in both worlds were granted to them, even if they were killed. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verses 169-170:

"And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allāh as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision. Rejoicing in what Allāh has bestowed upon them of His bounty…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 87:

"…But is it [not] that every time a messenger came to you, [O Children of Israel], with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant? And a party [of messengers] you denied and another party you killed."

A muslim must avoid behaving in a similar fashion which can occur when they act on parts of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which suits their desires and ignore those parts which contradict their desires. The one who behaves in this manner may fool themself and others into believing they are sincere muslims yet they are nothing but worshippers of their own desires. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

"Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?..."

A person must understand that strictly following the divine code of conduct is best for them under all circumstances as it comes directly from their Creator. In addition, just like a wise person accepts the bitter medicine and strict diet plan prescribed by their medical doctor as they know its best for them, despite the fact it contradicts their desires, a wise person must understand that accepting and acting on the divine guidance and code of conduct granted to mankind through the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is best for them, even if it contradicts their desires. But the same way a patient who ignores their doctor's advice because it contradicts their desires will suffer from mental and physical problems so will the person who ignores and fails to act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even if they happen to have moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

This is because it is alone Allah, the Exalted, who controls whether the worldly things one possesses becomes a source of stress or a source of peace for them in both worlds. It is Allah, the Exalted, alone who controls the spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. Therefore, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind and who does not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

The two options have been made clear by history, society and divine scriptures. Those who fail to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will find that the very worldly things they possess will become a source of stress, misery and depression for them in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whereas, those who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, correctly will find peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

These two life styles and the outcome of each are quite evident when one turns the pages of history, observes others within their society and when they study divine teachings. Therefore, a person must choose the right path for their own sake.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 88

وَقَالُوا۟ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌۢ ۚ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

“And they [people of the book] said, "Our hearts are wrapped." But, [in fact], Allah has cursed them for their disbelief, so little is it that they believe.”

The majority of the scholars from the people of the book living in Medina during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, employed many strategies in order to put off others from accepting Islam, many of these strategies have been discussed in the Holy Quran. Despite the fact that they clearly recognized the truthfulness of Islam, as the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were both described in their divine scriptures, they rejected Islam and strived hard to put off others from accepting it, as they feared losing their social status, leadership and the wealth which came with these things if they or their ignorant followers accepted Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

The misguided scholars and elite of society have always been the first to reject and oppose divine guidance simply because it challenged their lifestyle of misusing the blessings they had been granted by Allah, the Exalted. This attitude must therefore be avoided by muslims who can act in a similar

fashion by cherry picking which divine teachings to follow and which to ignore according to their desires. As clearly shown by history, this attitude only leads to stress, difficulties and trouble in both worlds, as the one who adopts this behaviour has forgotten Allah, the Exalted, even if they claim to be a sincere muslim. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

One of the strategies to put off others from accepting Islam is mentioned in the main verse under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 88:

"*And they [people of the book] said, "Our hearts are wrapped."…"*

As the scholars of the people of the book were experts in their own divine scriptures they would advocate how naturally it connected and suited the spiritual hearts of people. But they claimed that the Holy Quran did not have this affect on people, unlike their divine scriptures, therefore they concluded that the Holy Quran's origin was not the same as the origin of their divine scriptures, meaning, Allah, the Exalted, otherwise the Holy Quran would

have had the same deep impact on their spiritual hearts as their divine scriptures supposedly had. For example, a person who is familiar with a particular author can easily recognize their work, even if they are reading a passage where the author's name has been concealed from them. Similarly, they claimed that as the Holy Quran did not have the same deep effect on their spiritual hearts like their divine scriptures had it must mean the authors of both were different. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 88:

"*And they [people of the book] said, "Our hearts are wrapped."…"*

As the vast majority of their followers were ignorant, they assumed their scholars were the best people to recognize divine scripture and therefore they blindly followed them into denying the Holy Quran.

Muslims must avoid this attitude of blindly following others as Islam commands each person to learn and act on the teachings of Islam so that they clearly recognize and act on the fundamental truths of Islam for themself instead of blindly imitating others. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

"Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me…""

Behaving in this manner will ensure one does not blindly follow those whose only desire to obtain leadership and the worldly things which come with it, just like how many of the scholars from the people of the book behaved.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 88:

"*And they [people of the book] said, "Our hearts are wrapped."…"*

A muslim must avoid following in the footsteps of the people of the book by intentionally ignoring certain Islamic teachings which contradict their desires, thereby behaving as if their spiritual hearts have been blocked from those teachings so that they cannot understand nor act upon them. This behaviour only leads to the loss of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 88:

"…But, [in fact], Allāh has cursed them for their disbelief, so little is it that they believe."

Peace of mind and success in both worlds is not possible to obtain when one loses the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which is the direct result of being cursed. In addition, this verse makes it clear that behaving in this manner is an act of disbelief, not just the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. As

indicated by this verse, a muslim must therefore avoid the attitude of cherry picking from divine teachings as it may lead to the death of the little and weak faith their possess. Faith is like a plant which must be nourished correctly and protected from harmful substances. Just like a plant can die when exposed to harmful substances so can the faith of a muslim die if they adopt harmful characteristics, such as cherry picking which divine teachings to follow and which ones to ignore according to one's desires.

A muslim must instead strive to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, under all situations and circumstances, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that their faith blossoms and in turn provides them with peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 88:

"*And they [people of the book] said, "Our hearts are wrapped."…"*

This could also mean that the scholars from the people of the book claimed that their divine scriptures had granted them such strong spiritual hearts that they became completely fortified from all other things. Meaning, they were not in need of the Holy Quran as they already reached spiritual perfection through their own divine scriptures. This ignorant attitude can also be adopted by muslims who believe as they perform some spiritual exercises they are no longer bound to learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they have already reached spiritual perfection. Just like a student who graduates from a course no longer needs to attend lessons with their teacher, these people supposedly believe they no longer need the guidance of Islamic teachings as they have reached spiritual perfection. This is a highly ignorant attitude as the person who reached the highest level of perfection, meaning, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was never commanded to abandon acting on the teachings of Islam. In fact, he was commanded to hold firm onto them until death took him. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 99:

"And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty [i.e., death]."

Therefore one must avoid this ignorant attitude otherwise they will be deprived of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and may even be deprived of the little faith they do possess, which is the ultimate loss. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 88:

“…But, [in fact], Allāh has cursed them for their disbelief, so little is it that they believe.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 89-91

وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ كِتَٰبٌ مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا۟ مِن قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى
ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُم مَّا عَرَفُوا۟ كَفَرُوا۟ بِهِۦ ۚ فَلَعْنَةُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

بِئْسَمَا ٱشْتَرَوْا۟ بِهِۦٓ أَنفُسَهُمْ أَن يَكْفُرُوا۟ بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ
بَغْيًا أَن يُنَزِّلَ ٱللَّهُ مِن فَضْلِهِۦ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِۦ ۖ فَبَآءُو
بِغَضَبٍ عَلَىٰ غَضَبٍ ۚ وَلِلْكَٰفِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا۟ بِمَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ قَالُوا۟ نُؤْمِنُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ
عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَآءَهُۥ وَهُوَ ٱلْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ ۗ
قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنۢبِيَآءَ ٱللَّهِ مِن قَبْلُ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

"And when there came to them a Book [the Holy Quran] from Allah confirming that which was with them [the Torah] - although before they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved - but [then] when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it; so the curse of Allah will be upon the disbelievers.

How wretched is that for which they sold themselves - that they would disbelieve in what Allah has revealed through [their] outrage that Allah would send down His favor upon whom He wills from among His servants.

So they returned having [earned] wrath upon wrath. And for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment.

And when it is said to them [people of the book], "Believe in what Allah has revealed [the Holy Quran]," they say, "We believe [only] in what was revealed to us." And they disbelieve in what came after it, while it is the truth confirming that which is with them [Torah and Bible]. Say, "Then why did you kill the prophets of Allah before, if you are [indeed] believers?"”

The Holy Quran confirmed the correct teachings of the previous divine scriptures, the Torah and the Bible, and corrected the errors that were introduced into them by people. Those who adhered strictly to the Torah, such as Abdullah Bin Salaam, may Allah be pleased with him, prior to the coming of Islam, clearly recognized the truthfulness of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they both had been discussed in the previous divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

In addition, as the Author of all the divine scriptures is none other than Allah, the Exalted, those who adhered correctly to the Torah clearly recognized the Holy Quran. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 82-83:

“You will surely find the most intense of the people in animosity toward the believers [to be] the Jews and those who associate others with Allāh; and you will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, "We are Christians." That is because among them are priests and monks and because they are not arrogant. And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because of what they have recognized of the truth. They say, "Our Lord, we have believed, so register us among the witnesses.””

This is easy to understand, as the person who becomes familiar with a particular author easily recognizes their work. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 89:

“*And when there came to them a Book [the Holy Quran] from Allah confirming that which was with them [the Torah]…”*

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions how the people of the book would supplicate to Him to aid them in their battles and disputes in the name of the final divine revelation and Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 1, Pages 292-293. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 89:

“*And when there came to them a Book [the Holy Quran] from Allah confirming that which was with them [the Torah] - although before they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved…”*

In fact, it was this attitude that encouraged the idol worshippers living in Medina to embrace Islam as they were constantly threatened by the people of the book of the coming of the final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and final divine revelation and how through them both the people of the book would conquer all other nations. For example, Yusha, a Jewish scholar, living in Medina, would often declare that the time was near for the final Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, to be sent to the people of Arabia. He would urge people to believe in this final Holy Prophet, peace and be upon them, if they lived to his time and witnessed his call. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, declared Prophethood, the same people Yusha urged to accept this final Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, accepted him and became Muslims but Yusha himself rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Islam out of envy and evil. This incident has been recorded in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 212. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 89:

“…*but [then] when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it…”*

As mentioned earlier, the people of the book clearly recognized the truthfulness of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet rejected Islam out of love for following a code of

conduct which they fabricated by compromising on the teachings of their divine scriptures, so that they could misuse the blessings they had been granted and obtain worldly things, such as social status, leadership and wealth. As a result of their blatant act of disbelief, they were deprived of the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 89:

"…but [then] when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it; so the curse of Allah will be upon the disbelievers."

The curse of Allah, the Exalted, removes His mercy, which in turn only leads to trouble, stress and difficulties in both worlds. Without the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, the very worldly blessings one has been granted will become a source of misery, stress and depression. This is quite evident when one observes those who disobey Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted.

Muslims must avoid behaving in a similar manner towards the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, despite the fact they verbally testify to their truthfulness. They must avoid following in the footsteps of the people of the book by intentionally misinterpreting or ignoring Islamic teachings so that they can fulfill their desires by misusing the blessings they have been granted and by obtaining worldly things, such as wealth and leadership. As warned in verse 89, behaving in this manner is an act of disbelief. Therefore, the one who behaves in this manner must fear that they will be deprived of their faith before departing from this world. This can occur as faith is a like a plant which remains alive through obtaining nourishment and by being protected from

harmful substances. Just like a plant can die when exposed to harmful substances, so can the faith of a person die when it is exposed to harmful characteristics, such as ignoring and intentionally misinterpreting divine teachings for worldly gain.

The one who fails to behave in the correct way, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will find that they sold peace of mind and success in both worlds for the sake of fulfilling their transient and polluted desires. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 90:

"*How wretched is that for which they sold themselves…"*

Every person must decide whether to sell themself to the material world in exchange for a paltry sum or sell themself to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in exchange for peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 111:

"Indeed, Allāh has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise…"

One must always remember that their own life and whatever worldly blessings they possess have been created and granted to them by Allah, the Exalted. Understanding this reality will aid one in making the correct choice.

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights another reason why many from the people of the book rejected Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 90:

"…that they would disbelieve in what Allāh has revealed through [their] outrage that Allāh would send down His favor upon whom He wills from among His servants…"

The people of the book were the descendants of the Holy Prophet Ishaaq, peace be upon him, whereas the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the descendant of the brother of the Holy Prophet Ishaaq, the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon them. As the people of the book, especially the Jews, were entrenched in the love of lineage, which is the central aspect of their faith, they could not accept nor follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he was from a different lineage. They found accepting and following someone who was not from their lineage beneath them as this would remove the superiority of the children of Israel, something which they had fabricated.

A muslim must therefore avoid this racist attitude as it completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that the more one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined by divine teachings, the more superior they become. But it is important to note that as one's intention and many of their actions are hidden, only Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of who sincerely obeys Him. Therefore, one must never assume they are superior to others, even if they strive hard in sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. Sadly, many muslims have followed in the path of the people of the book by behaving as if Islam belongs to their nation and ethnicity. They look down on other muslims from different nations and backgrounds believing they are inferior to them. Islam makes it clear that this is an ignorant attitude as no worldly thing which separates people from one another, such as ethnicity, gender or race, has any influence on their status in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, as the people of the book could not accept following someone who was not from their lineage it caused them to adopt envy against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Envy is a major sin which must be avoided at all costs, as the envier directly challenges the choice and decree of Allah, the Exalted, who allocated a specific blessing to another person instead of giving it to them, in this case, Prophethood. The one who challenges and criticizes Allah, the Exalted, in this way will only draw onto themself the anger of Allah, the Exalted, as they behave as if they

know better than Him who deserves His blessings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 90:

"…*that they would disbelieve in what Allah has revealed through [their] outrage that Allah would send down His favor upon whom He wills from among His servants. So they returned having [earned] wrath upon wrath. And for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment."*

Their envy prevented them from accepting and supporting the truth which was clear to them. Envy contorts the understanding of people as it encourages them to behave in ways which prevents them from obtaining peace of mind and success, such as striving to remove a blessing granted to another person. In this case, the people of the book could have become part of the greatest generation that ever existed by accepting and supporting Islam yet their envy prevented them from obtaining this exalted rank, a rank which was much higher than the superiority they had gained through misinterpreting their divine scriptures.

A muslim must never make the mistake of believing their social rank will become reduced if they support others in what is good. History is full of examples of people who Allah, the Exalted, elevated in rank in both worlds, when they supported others in what was good, even if it meant the other people gained the limelight. For example, Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, could have easily become the first Caliph of Islam yet he did the right thing by nominating Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in the Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari numbers 3667 and 3668. As a result, Umar, may Allah be pleased with him,

went down in history as one of the greatest supporters of Islam and will always be remembered as a leader of mankind. Meaning, his rank only went up when he supported others in what was right, it did not go down. This is the truth the people of the book failed to understand.

In addition, the anger of Allah, the Exalted, on them was so severe because they rejected the truth of Islam despite clearly recognizing its truthfulness, as both the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been discussed in their divine scriptures. In addition, when many of the scholars from the people of the book disbelieved in Islam they strived hard to put off others from accepting Islam, such as their ignorant followers. Because of their envy for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and their love for misusing the blessings they had been granted, they caused countless people to become misguided. The one who behaves in this manner has therefore earned the anger of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 90:

"…*that they would disbelieve in what Allah has revealed through [their] outrage that Allah would send down His favor upon whom He wills from among His servants. So they returned having [earned] wrath upon wrath. And for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment."*

Generally speaking, this verse also indicates the highest status a person can achieve, namely, servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, on many occasions in the Holy Quran and in his traditions has been referred to as the servant of Allah, the Exalted, even before his Prophethood has been mentioned. Therefore,

the one who desires the highest station in both worlds must strive to adopt true servanthood to Allah, the Exalted. A true servant of Allah, the Exalted, always places the will of Allah, the Exalted, above their desires and accepts the fact that everything they have been granted, including their own life, belongs solely to Allah, the Exalted, and must therefore be utilised in ways pleasing to Him. The servant of Allah, the Exalted, does not search or long for their own pleasure. They only seek the pleasure of their Master, Allah, the Exalted. The one who behaves in this manner will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 90:

"…*that they would disbelieve in what Allah has revealed through [their] outrage that Allah would send down His favor upon whom He wills from among His servants. So they returned having [earned] wrath upon wrath. And for the disbelievers is a humiliating punishment."*

Allah, the Exalted, then criticizes the attitude of the people of the book who rejected the Holy Quran despite recognizing its truthfulness and claimed that they only believed in what was revealed to them, the Torah and the Bible. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 91:

"*And when it is said to them [people of the book], "Believe in what Allah has revealed [the Holy Quran]," they say, "We believe [only] in what was revealed to us." And they disbelieve in what came after it, while it is the truth confirming that which is with them [Torah and Bible]…"*

Yet their claim of only believing in their divine scriptures was also false, as they intentionally misinterpreted and edited them for the sake of worldly gain, such as wealth and leadership. Even when Allah, the Exalted, sent Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, to them in order to correct the errors they had introduced into their divine scriptures, they denied some of them and killed others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 87:

"…But is it [not] that every time a messenger came to you, [O Children of Israel], with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant? And a party [of messengers] you denied and another party you killed."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 91:

"And when it is said to them, "Believe in what Allāh has revealed," they say, "We believe [only] in what was revealed to us." And they disbelieve in what came after it, while it is the truth confirming that which is with them. Say, "Then why did you kill the prophets of Allāh before, if you are [indeed] believers?""

The people of the book living in Medina in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only attempted to kill him

and never actually killed a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, but as they openly endorsed the actions of their ancestors, who did kill Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, they were grouped together with them by Allah, the Exalted.

This indicates the importance of not blindly following others as one will be counted as those whose attitude and behaviour their endorse and mimic. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031. Therefore, if muslims adopt the attitude of the people of the book who failed to sincerely act on divine teachings, then they may well end up with them in the hereafter.

Finally, the end of verse 91 also indicates the importance of supporting one's verbal claim of faith with righteous actions. The people of the book claimed to be believers yet failed to support their claim with acts of obedience. Muslims must avoid this behaviour and instead support their verbal declaration of faith with the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Otherwise, the same way the claims of the people of the book of possessing belief were dismissed by Allah, the Exalted, so will the verbal claims of the muslims who claim to believe in Islam be dismissed by Him if they fail to support their claims with acts of obedience.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 92-93

۞ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكُم مُّوسَىٰ بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ ثُمَّ ٱتَّخَذْتُمُ ٱلْعِجْلَ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِۦ وَأَنتُمْ
ظَٰلِمُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَٰقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ ٱلطُّورَ خُذُوا۟ مَآ ءَاتَيْنَٰكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَٱسْمَعُوا۟ ۖ
قَالُوا۟ سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأُشْرِبُوا۟ فِى قُلُوبِهِمُ ٱلْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ ۚ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا
يَأْمُرُكُم بِهِۦٓ إِيمَٰنُكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

“And Moses had certainly brought you clear proofs. Then you took the calf [in worship] after that, while you were wrongdoers.

And [recall] when We took your [children of Israel] covenant and raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination and listen." They said [instead], "We hear and disobey." And their hearts absorbed [the love of] the calf because of their disbelief. Say, "How wretched is that which your faith enjoins upon you, if you should be believers."”

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds the people of the book living in Medina during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and by extension the muslim nation, of the disobedience of the children of Israel when they worshipped a golden status despite the fact they had physically witnessed many proofs granted to the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, such as his staff turning into a snake and miraculous destruction of Pharaoh and his army. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 92:

“And Moses had certainly brought you clear proofs. Then you took the calf [in worship] after that, while you were wrongdoers.”

The clearest and timeless proofs in this time are the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One must learn and act on them in order to strengthen their faith, which in turn will protect them from disobeying Allah, the Exalted, through misusing the blessings they have been granted. But if a muslim adopts ignorance as they way, then they will be more likely to follow in the footsteps of the children of Israel who chose fulfilling their desires over the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This only leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 92:

“And Moses had certainly brought you clear proofs. Then you took the calf [in worship] after that, while you were wrongdoers.”

They behaved in this manner as the golden calf represented a life where they were free to fulfill all their worldly desires, as the golden calf was not able to give them a code of conduct to adhere to which moderated their desires. Whereas, the teachings brought by the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, gave them a higher code of conduct to adhere to which moderated their desires and behaviour. Muslims must avoid this behaviour by ignoring the teachings of Islam which contradict their desires and follow those teachings which suit their desires. This cherry picking attitude is what the children of Israel adopted and it lead to their punishment in both worlds as the one who behaves in this manner is only worshipping their own desires. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 23:

“Have you seen he who has taken as his god his [own] desire…”

A muslim must accept the teachings of Islam even if it challenges their desires as these teachings are best for them, even if they fail to understand

the wisdoms behind them. They must accept and follow these teachings just like they accept and follow the advice of their medical doctor knowing its best for them, even when they are prescribed bitter medicine and a strict diet plan.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions the strong covenant He took from the children of Israel of sincerely obeying Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 93:

"*And [recall] when We took your [children of Israel] covenant and raised over you the mount…"*

It is important to note that the mountain was not raised over them in order to force them to accept faith, as they had already accepted faith from before. Faith can never be forced onto anyone as it is a matter of the spiritual heart. A person's body can be forced into doing something but it is not possible to force someone's spiritual heart to accept something through force. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion…"

The mountain was raised over them in order to strengthen their faith by witnessing yet another miracle and it was a reminder of the seriousness of

practically supporting their verbal claim of faith with actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 93:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant and raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination…””

Taking with determination indicates the importance of striving to learn and act on divine teachings in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This is not possible to do when one abandons divine teachings or recites them in a language they do not understand. Determination does not mean perfection as Allah, the Exalted, has never demanded perfection from people. He commands them to strive hard to learn and act on divine teachings so that they use the blessings He granted them in ways pleasing to Him, which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And whenever one happens to commit a sin, determination includes sincerely repenting from it. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone else who has been wronged, as long as this does not lead to further trouble, promising not to

commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

"…so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 93:

"And [recall] when We took your covenant and raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination…""

Determination also includes remaining firm on divine teachings and avoiding all other sources of religious knowledge even if they lead to good actions. One must therefore adhere strictly to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoid other sources of religious knowledge, as the more one acts on other things, the less they will act on these two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 93:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant and raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination and listen…””

Listening indicates the importance of not behaving like the one who hears something with one ear but the words pass out though their other ear without affecting their behaviour in any way. Listening is higher than hearing, as listening involves carefully hearing what has been spoken, reflecting over the words heard and striving to implement those teachings into one’s character. Merely hearing words without this reflection or implementation has very little value in both religious and worldly matters. Muslims must therefore avoid behaving as if hearing an Islamic lecture is good enough. They must instead strive to listen carefully, reflect on what has been discussed and strive to implement its teachings into their behaviour and conduct towards Allah, the Exalted, and people. But this is something the children of Israel understood but could not do as it directly challenged their desires. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 93:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant and raised over you the mount, [saying], "Take what We have given you with determination and listen." They said [instead], "We hear and disobey."…”

It is unlikely the children of Israel actually said these words and the verse is describing the voice of their spiritual hearts and actions instead of their tongues. Meaning, they verbally claimed to obeying Allah, the Exalted, but their actions clearly showed that they disobeyed Him despite the fact they heard and learned divine teachings. Muslims must therefore avoid this attitude of verbally claiming faith in Allah, the Exalted, while failing to support their declaration with actions. Faith is a like plant which must be nourished with practical actions of obedience. Just like a plant will die if it is deprived of nourishment, such as water, so may well the faith of a muslim die if they fail to nourish their verbal claim of faith with physical actions of obedience. The one who behaves in this manner is only following in the footsteps of the children of Israel. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 93:

“…They said [instead], "We hear and disobey."…”

In addition, practical obedience is one’s proof which is needed to obtain peace of mind in this world and success in the hereafter. Obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

As the children of Israel could not accept living by a divine code of conduct which moderated their desires, their spiritual hearts became completely hardened towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 93:

"…And their hearts absorbed [the worship of] the calf because of their disbelief…"

Allah, the Exalted, then criticizes this attitude, where one verbally claims to believe in Allah, the Exalted, yet fails to support this with physical actions of obedience. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 93:

"…Say, "How wretched is that which your faith enjoins upon you, if you should be believers.""

This final comment was given on the tongue of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to the people of the book living in Medina, as they were following in the footsteps of their ancestors, the children of Israel. They claimed faith in Allah, the Exalted, yet failed to support their claim with physical actions when they rejected the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, despite recognizing their truthfulness, as they had both been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

Muslims must therefore avoid following in the footsteps of the people of the book and the children of Israel by failing to support their verbal declaration of belief in Allah, the Exalted, with physical actions of obedience. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Otherwise they will receive the same criticism the children of Israel and the people of the book received. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 93:

“…Say, "How wretched is that which your faith enjoins upon you, if you should be believers."”

It does not take a scholar to determine that the one who receives this criticism and fails to repent will not obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 94-96

قُلْ إِن كَانَتْ لَكُمُ ٱلدَّارُ ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّن دُونِ ٱلنَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا۟ ٱلْمَوْتَ إِن
كُنتُمْ صَـٰدِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

وَلَن يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًۢا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِٱلظَّـٰلِمِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ ٱلنَّاسِ عَلَىٰ حَيَوٰةٍ وَمِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا۟ ۚ يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ
وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحْزِحِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ أَن يُعَمَّرَ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بَصِيرٌۢ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

“Say, "If the home of the Hereafter with Allah is for you [people of the book] alone and not the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful."

But never will they wish for it, ever, because of what their hands have put forth. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.

And you will surely find them the most greedy of people for life - [even] more than those who associate others with Allah. One of them wishes that he could be granted life a thousand years, but it would not remove him in the least from the [coming] punishment that he should be granted life. And Allah is Seeing of what they do.”

The people of the book would claim that as they were the favorites of Allah, the Exalted, they were guaranteed salvation in the hereafter irrespective of their behaviour and actions. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 18:

"But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of Allāh and His beloved." Say, "Then why does He punish you for your sins?" Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created…"

Their misguided attitude caused them to adopt wishful thinking in respect to Allah, the Exalted. One must understand that wishful thinking is always tied to persistently disobeying Allah, the Exalted, while true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is always tied to His obedience, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This difference has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. One must therefore avoid wishful thinking as it has no value in Islam and only leads to misguidance. In fact, the one who adopts wishful thinking in respect to Allah, the Exalted, like the people of the book, will only adopt a highly disrespectful attitude towards Allah, the Exalted. By claiming they were guaranteed salvation simply because of their lineage would mean that divine mercy is based on racism. It would mean that Allah, the Exalted, would treat the doer of good equally to the evildoer, which completely contradicts the truth and His justice. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 21:

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.”

Sadly, this wishful thinking attitude has been adopted by many muslims who make the same claim as the people of the book did. They believe that as they belong to the nation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they are guaranteed salvation. This is a highly foolish and disrespectful attitude to adopt as it clearly contradicts the teachings of Islam. One must place true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, by striving to sincerely obey Him, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and sincerely repent whenever they happen to commit a sin. Sincere repentance involves feeling remorse, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone else who has been wronged, as long as this does not lead to further trouble, promising not to commit the same or similar sin again and making up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. The one who behaves in this manner is worthy of placing hope in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted.

A person’s rank in the eyes of Allah, the Exalted, is only connected to how much they sincerely obey Him. It is not connected to any worldly factor, such as one’s gender, ethnicity, lineage or wealth. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…”

Believing otherwise will only encourage one to adopt the same wishful thinking the people of the book adopted.

Allah, the Exalted, then challenges the people of the book and their misguided attitude. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah 94:

“Say, "If the home of the Hereafter with Allah is for you [people of the book] alone and not the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful."”

This challenge would be readily accepted by the one who truly believes they are guaranteed salvation in the hereafter irrespective of their behaviour and actions. Why would one want to remain in this world, which is full of difficulties, tests, sickness and stress, when they can obtain Paradise by wishing for death or committing suicide? Even if committing suicide is considered a sin in their belief it will not prevent them from Paradise as they have already been guaranteed salvation according to their belief. Yet, the truth is that they are fully aware of the truth despite the fact they verbally claim what is false. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 95:

“*But never will they wish for it, ever, because of what their hands have put forth. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”*

They full well know they will not escape facing the consequences of their actions in the hereafter and they therefore would never wish for death. But no matter how much they wish to remain in this world, they will always face some consequences in it, even if these consequences are not obvious to them, such as the very worldly blessings they obtain through disobeying Allah, the Exalted, becoming a source of their misery and stress. And what follows in the hereafter will be even worse if they fail to repent. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

They cannot escape facing the consequences of their actions even if this is not obvious to them as nothing escapes the knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, nor can anything escape His authority and power. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 95:

“*…And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”*

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 94-95:

“Say, "If the home of the Hereafter with Allah is for you [people of the book] alone and not the [other] people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful." But never will they wish for it, ever, because of what their hands have put forth. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”

One could question why the people of the book did not demand the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to wish for death if they believed they were on the correct path. Firstly, a Muslim does not know whether they will die with their faith or not. As the danger exists of dying without faith, a Muslim should not ask for death and must instead strengthen their faith through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and then hope that when they do eventually die, Allah, the Exalted, will protect their faith so that they obtain salvation in the hereafter. Secondly, even if a Muslim dies with their faith there is still a chance they may enter Hell first before they are let into Paradise, as a punishment for their sins. Even a moment in Hell is unbearable therefore a Muslim should not wish for death, as they may not have obeyed Allah, the Exalted, enough in order to obtain Paradise without entering Hell first. Generally speaking, the people of the book on the other

hand were not hindered by these two points as they claimed they were guaranteed salvation in the hereafter because of their lineage. And those who claimed that they would only enter Hell for a few days did not possess the fear of Hell Islam teaches Muslims to possess. Muslims have been taught that entering Hell for a moment is unbearable , whereas the people of the book believe Hell for them will only be a small nuisance. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 80:

“And they say, "Never will the Fire touch us, except for [a few] numbered days."…”

Therefore, if they were speaking the truth they would have accepted this challenge and verbally wished for death but as they did not it revealed their false belief. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 95:

“*…And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”*

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions the extreme love for worldly life the people of the book possess. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 96:

“*And you will surely find them the most greedy of people for life - [even] more than those who associate others with Allah. One of them wishes that he could be granted life a thousand years…”*

This attitude is even clear in this age as the only thing the people of the book ever wish for and desire are more worldly things, such as wealth, a job, marriage and a career. As they believe salvation in the hereafter is already guaranteed to them, they therefore only concentrate on acquiring and enjoying worldly things. Even though Islam does not prohibit acquiring and enjoying lawful worldly things in moderation none the less it teaches mankind that their purpose is not enjoy worldly things, rather it is to practically prepare for their meeting with Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day, a Day on which their salvation is not guaranteed. This practical preparation involves using the worldly blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

A muslim must therefore avoid adopting the attitude of the people of the book whose only goal is to acquire and enjoy worldly things. As the world is temporary and imperfect, no matter what one obtains and enjoys it will only lead to long-term stress and difficulties for them, as their attitude will only cause them to forget Allah, the Exalted, through misusing the blessings they have been granted. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

This reality is then mentioned by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 96:

"*And you will surely find them the most greedy of people for life - [even] more than those who associate others with Allah. One of them wishes that he could be granted life a thousand years, but it would not remove him in the least from the [coming] punishment that he should be granted life…"*

Irrespective of how many years a person is granted in this world, they must eventually return back to Allah, the Exalted, for their final reckoning. As this final journey and accountability is inevitable it makes sense to practically prepare for it, as their long life or the luxuries they enjoy in this world will not divert their inevitable accountability on Judgement Day. This practical preparation involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Just like a wise student practically prepares for their inevitable exam so will the wise

muslim prepare for their inevitable reckoning, even if they are granted a long life in this world. One must remember that their long life in this world or the worldly desires they enjoy will not make them feel better if they end up in Hell, as Hell has the characteristic of stripping away a person's good memories in a way which makes them feel they never experienced anything good in their entire existence. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, verse 4321.

In addition, a person must understand that irrespective of how many years they are granted in this world, their life will go by in a flash. This is a fact no person, irrespective of their faith, can deny. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 45:

"And on the Day when He will gather them, [it will be] as if they had not remained [in the world] but an hour of the day…"

Therefore, it does not make sense to enjoy a moment of pleasure in this world if it leads to long term difficulties and punishment in the hereafter.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 96:

"*And you will surely find them the most greedy of people for life - [even] more than those who associate others with Allah. One of them wishes that he could*

be granted life a thousand years, but it would not remove him in the least from the [coming] punishment that he should be granted life…"

Generally speaking, this verse also criticizes possessing hopes for a long life in this world. False hopes for a long life will encourage one to delay performing good deeds, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as they believe they have plenty of time to perform good deeds. False hopes for a long life will also encourage one to delay sincerely repenting from one's sins and improving their behaviour towards Allah, the Exalted, and people, as they believe they have plenty of time to change their conduct and actions. Finally, false hopes for a long life will encourage one to hoard and enjoy worldly things in order to make their long stay in this world comfortable. On the other hand, believing one's life will pass by in a flash will encourage them to perform righteous deeds, sincerely repent from their sins, improve their behaviour towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and it will encourage them to make do with their basic necessities and needs in this world. This will cause one to focus on preparing for their final reckoning in the hereafter which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

A muslim must avoid the greed and love for worldly life by understanding that compared to the hereafter life in this world will always be temporal, small and imperfect. Whereas, the bliss of the hereafter is eternal, unimaginably huge and perfect in every way. Therefore, they must use the worldly blessings they have been granted correctly so that they obtain the eternal and perfect bliss of the hereafter, a bliss which is earned by striving in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

In addition, a muslim must strive to send ahead as much good as possible to the hereafter, which is only achieved by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they focus on meeting the good they have sent ahead to the hereafter instead of focusing on their worldly life. Chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 18:

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh. And let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow - and fear Allāh. Indeed, Allāh is Aware of what you do.”

But if one adopts the attitude of the people of the book, they will not send anything good forward and will therefore only focus on their worldly life.

To conclude, the two paths have been made clear by Allah, the Exalted. The path of understanding that peace of mind in this world and salvation in the hereafter is obtained through His sincere obedience not through wishful

thinking. And the path of error where one believes they can behave as they wish and still achieve peace of mind and salvation in both worlds. It is now up to people to decide which path they choose, as Allah, the Exalted, is watching and will undoubtedly hold them accountable for their choice and actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 96:

"…And Allah is Seeing of what they do."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 97-99

قُلْ مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُۥ نَزَّلَهُۥ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

مَن كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَىٰلَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِّلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ءَايَٰتٍۭ بَيِّنَٰتٍ ۖ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَآ إِلَّا ٱلْفَٰسِقُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

“Say, "Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel - it is [none but] he who has brought it [the Holy Quran] down upon your heart, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], by permission of Allah, confirming that which was before it [Torah and Bible] and as guidance and good tidings for the believers."

Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and His messengers and Gabriel and Michael - then indeed, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.

And We have certainly revealed to you verses [which are] clear proofs, and no one would deny them except the defiantly disobedient.”

Just like the non-muslims of Mecca, the people of the book would come up with lame excuses in order to justify their rejection of Islam. One of these lame excuses is mentioned in these verses. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 97:

“Say, "Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel - it is [none but] he who has brought it [the Holy Quran] down upon your heart, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], by permission of Allah, confirming that which was before it [Torah and Bible]…”

The Holy Quran descended onto the spiritual heart of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This indicates that the purpose of the Holy Quran is to purify the spiritual hearts of people, not just correct their mentality. One can only purify their spiritual heart when they adopt the good characteristics mentioned within the Holy Quran, such as generosity, patience and gratitude, and avoid the bad characteristics mentioned therein, such as envy, greed and impatience. The one who adopts a purified spiritual heart will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra’d, verse 28:

“…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And chapter 26 Ash Shu’ara, verses 88-89:

“The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 97:

“Say, "Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel - it is [none but] he who has brought it [the Holy Quran] down upon your heart, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], by permission of Allah, confirming that which was before it [Torah and Bible]…”

The Holy Quran confirmed the correct teachings of the previous divine scriptures and corrected the errors that were introduced into them by people. As the Author of all the divine scriptures is Allah, the Exalted, the scholars from the people of the book clearly recognized the origin of the Holy Quran, as a person who is aware of a particular author recognizes their work. But simply recognizing the origin of the Holy Quran is not good enough in order to obtain guidance from it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 97:

“…confirming that which was before it [Torah and Bible] and as guidance and good tidings for the believers."

Only those who truly believe in the Holy Quran will obtain right guidance from it, as they alone will sincerely learn and act on it. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

This indicates the importance of supporting one's verbal declaration of belief with actions, as words without actions do not lead to right guidance. A map to a safe destination is only useful when one practically uses it. Simply possessing the map does not lead one to their safe destination. Similarly, simply believing in the Holy Quran and possessing a copy of it in one's home does not lead to right guidance through every situation, only learning and acting on it does. When one learns and acts on the Holy Quran it will guide them through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. In times of ease, it will teach them how to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Him. In times of difficulties, the Holy Quran will show them how to maintain patience, which involves avoiding complaining verbally or practically and remaining firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, while believing He only chooses what is best for His servants. As indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500, this leads to reward and success in every situation.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 97:

“*Say, "Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel - it is [none but] he who has brought it [the Holy Quran] down upon your heart, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], by permission of Allah…"”*

The people of the book claimed that as the Archangel Jibraeel, peace be upon him, brought down the Holy Quran to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would not accept it, as they claimed that it was Jibraeel, peace be upon him, who would descend on their ancestors, the children of Israel, with the punishment of Allah, the Exalted. They claimed if the Archangel Mikael, peace be upon him, brought down the Holy Quran they would accept it. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 1, Pages 304-305. This was a foolish reason for rejecting the Holy Quran as the Angels, all of them, only do exactly what Allah, the Exalted, commands them to do. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

“…angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allāh in what He commands them but do what they are commanded.”

So in reality, those who were criticizing the Archangel Jibraeel, peace be upon him, were in fact criticizing Allah, the Exalted, as He alone commands the Angels. In fact, the one who criticizes any devoted and obedient slave of Allah, the Exalted, whether they are the Angels or the Holy Prophets, peace

be upon them, is criticizing Allah, the Exalted. This is the reason why Allah, the Exalted, declares that He is the enemy of anyone who criticizes His sincere servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 98:

“Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and His messengers and Gabriel and Michael - then indeed, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.”

In addition, this verse indicates that rejecting and possessing enmity for one of the servants of Allah, the Exalted, such as the Angels or the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is equal to rejecting and possessing enmity for them all. This was a subtle dig at the people of the book who claimed to believe in some Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, but rejected others. Allah, the Exalted, clearly states that this attitude is clear disbelief.

This verse also warns that criticizing the close servants of Allah, the Exalted, is an act of disbelief and must therefore be avoided at all times. This can often happen when one criticizes the Holy Quran or the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they contradict their desires. This criticism does not necessarily need to be verbal. One can criticize the teachings of Islam practically by ignoring them when they are informed of them.

As the people of the book’s criticism was unconstructive, it was dismissed by Allah, the Exalted. Generally speaking, this also indicates the importance

of ignoring the unconstructive criticism of others in respect to worldly and religious manners. A person must never take unconstructive criticism personally and instead continue on their way. A muslim must instead accept any constructive criticism in both worldly and religious matters as long as the teachings of Islam are not contradicted, as accepting constructive criticism is required to improve one's behaviour towards Allah, the Exalted, and people. A person must compare the criticism of people to the teachings of Islam and accept it if it coincides with the teachings of Islam or ignore it if it does not.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions how the people of the book clearly recognized the truthfulness of the Holy Quran, as it and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were discussed in the previous divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 99:

"*And We have certainly revealed to you verses [which are] clear proofs, and no one would deny them except the defiantly disobedient."*

As indicated by this verse, only when one approaches the Holy Quran with an open mind will they recognize its unparalleled nature in respect to its all-encompassing advice, guidance, timeless nature and its ability to be acted upon by anyone from any background and generation irrespective of the level of their knowledge. The expressions in the Holy Quran are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a straight forward way. Its words and verses are extremely eloquent and no other book can surpass it. The Holy Quran mentions the history of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commands every good and forbids every evil. Those which affect an individual and those which affect the entire society, so that justice, security and peace spreads throughout every home and community. The Holy Quran avoids exaggerations, lies or any falsehood, unlike poetry, stories and fables. All the verses are beneficial and can be applied practically to one's life. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran, different important lessons are highlighted. Unlike all other books, the Holy Quran does not bore a person when it is repeatedly studied. The Holy Quran provides promises and warnings and supports them with undeniable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses something which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides a simple and practical way of implementing it into one's life. It encourages people to fulfil the purpose of their creation, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to

Him, thereby ensuring they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. It makes the straight path obvious and appealing to the one who desires peace of mind and real success in both worlds. The knowledge of the Holy Quran is timeless as it can be applied to every society and age. It is a cure for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It provides the solution for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever face. One only needs to observe history and how the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly benefited from its all-encompassing and timeless teachings. Centuries have passed yet not a single letter has been changed in the Holy Quran, as Allah, the Exalted, promised to preserve it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian."

Allah, the Exalted, discussed the root problems found within a community and detailed the practical remedy for all of them. By correcting root problems, the countless branch problems which stem from them would automatically be corrected. This is how the Holy Quran addressed all the things a person and society need to succeed in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 89:

"…And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things…"

This is the greatest timeless miracle Allah, the Exalted, bestowed upon His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But only those who seek and act on the truth will benefit from it whereas those who seek their desires and cherry pick from it will only encounter loss in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

"And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss."

But when one adopts the attitude which the people of the book adopted, then they will make lame excuses in order to justify their rejection of the Holy Quran. They behave in this manner simply because the Holy Quran provides them with a higher code of conduct which moderates their behaviour. But as they desire to unleash their desires by misusing the blessings they have been granted, they reject the Holy Quran through lame excuses. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 99:

"*And We have certainly revealed to you verses [which are] clear proofs, and no one would deny them except the defiantly disobedient."*

A muslim must therefore avoid behaving in this manner practically even if they verbally claim to believe in the Holy Quran. One must study and act on the Holy Quran so that it strengthens their faith in Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability on Judgement Day. This will ensure they remain

steadfast on sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn will lead to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if one follows in the footsteps of the people of the book by practically rejecting the Holy Quran, then they will misuse the blessings they have been granted which will result in difficulties in both worlds, even if they happen to have moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day

of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 100

أَوَكُلَّمَا عَاهَدُوا۟ عَهْدًا نَّبَذَهُۥ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

“Is it not [true] that every time they [people of the book] took a covenant a party of them threw it away? But, [in fact], most of them do not believe.”

Allah, the Exalted, criticized the people of the book, who claimed to be sincere believers in Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 100:

"Is it not [true] that every time they [people of the book] took a covenant a party of them threw it away?..."

Many from the people of the book, like their ancestors, the children of Israel, were good at verbally claiming belief in Allah, the Exalted, but failed to support them with actions. They would instead intentionally misinterpret and edit divine teachings so that they could fulfill their worldly desires and gain worldly things, such as wealth and leadership, through bribery and corruption. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 34:

"O you who have believed, indeed many of the scholars and the monks devour the wealth of people unjustly and avert [them] from the way of Allāh…"

They failed to uphold the promise of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. For example, they intentionally rejected Islam despite the fact they recognized its truthfulness, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran were discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verses 155-157:

“And Moses chose from his people seventy men for Our appointment. And when the earthquake seized them, he said, "My Lord, if You had willed, You could have destroyed them before and me [as well]. Would You destroy us for what the foolish among us have done? This is not but Your trial by which You send astray whom You will and guide whom You will. You are our Protector, so forgive us and have mercy upon us; and You are the best of forgivers. And decree for us in this world [that which is] good and [also] in the Hereafter; indeed, we have turned back to You." [Allāh] said, "My punishment - I afflict with it whom I will, but My mercy encompasses all things." So I will decree it [especially] for those who fear Me and give zakāh and those who believe in Our verses. Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written [i.e., described] in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and prohibits them from what is wrong and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him - it is those who will be the successful.”

And chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 100:

“Is it not [true] that every time they [people of the book] took a covenant a party of them threw it away?...”

This verse also makes it clear that not all the people of the book or the children of Israel behaved in this manner. Many of them did sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in divine teachings. This indicates the importance of not judging an entire group based on the actions of some members of that group, as this often leads to discrimination, such as racism.

In addition, Muslims must avoid imitating the people of the book by failing to uphold their promise of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times, as the one who imitates a people is considered from them. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031. Muslims must avoid intentionally misinterpreting and cherry picking which Islamic teachings to follow and which ones to ignore as this causes one to misuse the blessings

they have been granted, which in turn leads to trouble and stress in both worlds, even if one claims to sincerely believe in Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In fact the main verse under discussion makes it clear that the one who fails to fulfil their promise of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, runs the risk of losing their faith. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 100:

"Is it not [true] that every time they [people of the book] took a covenant a party of them threw it away? But, [in fact], most of them do not believe."

This is because faith is like a plant which must be nourished by acts of obedience. The same way a plant will die if it fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, so well may the faith of a muslim die if they fail to nourish it

with acts of obedience. Therefore, one must support their verbal declaration and promise of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, with actions, by using the blessings they have been granted correctly so that they find peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 100:

"Is it not [true] that every time they [people of the book] took a covenant a party of them threw it away? But, [in fact], most of them do not believe."

This verse also indicates that the root cause of failing to fulfil one's promise of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, is weakness of faith. When one's faith in Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability on Judgement Day is weak then there is more chance they will misuse the blessings they have been granted thereby failing to fulfil their promise of obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. Muslims must therefore avoid weakness of faith by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will lead to strong faith, which in turn encourages one to practically prepare for their accountability on Judgement Day. This will ensure one fulfils their promise of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by

using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 101-103

وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمۡ رَسُولٞ مِّنۡ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٞ لِّمَا مَعَهُمۡ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٞ مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ
ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ كِتَٰبَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَآءَ ظُهُورِهِمۡ كَأَنَّهُمۡ لَا يَعۡلَمُونَ ١٠١

وَٱتَّبَعُواْ مَا تَتۡلُواْ ٱلشَّيَٰطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلۡكِ سُلَيۡمَٰنَ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيۡمَٰنُ وَلَٰكِنَّ
ٱلشَّيَٰطِينَ كَفَرُواْ يُعَلِّمُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ ٱلسِّحۡرَ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ عَلَى ٱلۡمَلَكَيۡنِ بِبَابِلَ هَٰرُوتَ
وَمَٰرُوتَ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ مِنۡ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَآ إِنَّمَا نَحۡنُ فِتۡنَةٞ فَلَا تَكۡفُرۡ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنۡهُمَا
مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِۦ بَيۡنَ ٱلۡمَرۡءِ وَزَوۡجِهِۦ وَمَا هُم بِضَآرِّينَ بِهِۦ مِنۡ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذۡنِ ٱللَّهِ
وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمۡ وَلَا يَنفَعُهُمۡ وَلَقَدۡ عَلِمُواْ لَمَنِ ٱشۡتَرَىٰهُ مَا لَهُۥ فِي ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ
مِنۡ خَلَٰقٖ وَلَبِئۡسَ مَا شَرَوۡاْ بِهِۦٓ أَنفُسَهُمۡ لَوۡ كَانُواْ يَعۡلَمُونَ ١٠٢

وَلَوۡ أَنَّهُمۡ ءَامَنُواْ وَٱتَّقَوۡاْ لَمَثُوبَةٞ مِّنۡ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ خَيۡرٞۚ لَّوۡ كَانُواْ يَعۡلَمُونَ ١٠٣

“And when a messenger from Allah came to them confirming that which was with them, a party of those who had been given the Scripture threw the Scripture of Allah [the Torah] behind their backs as if they did not know [what it contained].

And they [the Children of Israel] followed [instead of their divine scriptures] what the devils had recited during the reign of Solomon. It was not Solomon who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and that which was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt. But they [the two angels] do not teach anyone unless they say, "We are a trial, so do not disbelieve." And [yet] they learn from them that by

which they cause separation between a man and his wife. But they do not harm anyone through it except by permission of Allah. And they [people] learn what harms them and does not benefit them. But they [the Children of Israel] certainly knew that whoever purchased it [magic] would not have in the Hereafter any share. And wretched is that for which they sold themselves, if they only knew.

And if they [the people of the book] had believed and feared Allah, then the reward from Allah would have been [far] better, if they only knew."

The Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, confirmed the correct teachings of the previous divine scriptures, the Torah and the Bible, and corrected the errors that were introduced into them by corrupt people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 101:

“And when a messenger from Allāh came to them confirming that which was with them…”

As the Author of all the divine scriptures is Allah, the Exalted, the scholars from the people of the book clearly recognized the origins of the Holy Quran. A person who is familiar with a particular author easily recognizes their work. In addition, they clearly recognized the truthfulness of Islam as both the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

Despite their recognition and understanding of the truth, many from the scholars of the people of the book still rejected Islam out of fear of losing their leadership and the things which came with it, such as wealth, and they feared being forced to live by a code of conduct whereby they had to control their worldly desires. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 101:

“And when a messenger from Allāh came to them confirming that which was with them, a party of those who had been given the Scripture threw the Scripture of Allāh [i.e., the Torah] behind their backs as if they did not know [what it contained].”

This verse makes it clear that knowledge without actions has no value. This applies to both religious and worldly matters. The same way an employee, such as a surgeon, will not get paid until they actualize the knowledge they possess, neither will a muslim benefit from the Islamic knowledge they possess until they sincerely act upon it. Knowledge by itself does not lead to salvation just like a map by itself does not take a person to their desired destination until it is acted upon.

In addition, verse 101 also makes it clear that not all the people of the book or the children of Israel behaved in this manner. Many of them did sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in divine teachings. This indicates the importance of not judging an entire group based on the actions

of some members of that group, as this often leads to discrimination, such as racism.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 101:

“And when a messenger from Allāh came to them confirming that which was with them, a party of those who had been given the Scripture threw the Scripture of Allāh [i.e., the Torah] behind their backs as if they did not know [what it contained].”

Muslims must avoid behaving in this manner in respect to Islamic teachings. This can easily occur when one cherry picks which Islamic teachings to follow and which ones to ignore according to their desires. The one who behaves in this manner must not be fooled into thinking they sincerely believe in Allah, the Exalted, when in fact they are only worshipping their own desires. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

“Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?...”

Islam is not like a coat which one can put on and take off according to their sweet will. Rather, it is a way of life which must be acted on in every situation one faces and with every blessing one has been granted, even if this

contradicts their desires. A muslim must accept and act on Islamic teachings just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan which contradict their desires. The same way a patient that ignores their doctor's advice will end up with poor mental and physical health, so will the person who ignores the teachings of Islam. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whereas, the same way a patient who accepts and acts on the advice of their doctor will obtain good mental and physical health, so will the person who sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even if their desires are contradicted. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Even though the people of the book claimed to be sincere believers in the Torah, yet they would ignore its teachings which contradicted their desires and instead pursued alternate evil and misguiding knowledge, such as black magic. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

“And they followed [instead] what the devils had recited during the reign of Solomon…”

Muslims must therefore avoid all other types of so-called religious knowledge and instead adhere strictly to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even if the actions recommended by other sources of religious knowledge are good deeds. It is a fact that the more one acts on alternate sources of religious knowledge, even if it leads to good deeds, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance: Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606.

In order to justify their own sins, many scholars from the people of the book introduced errors into the previous divine scriptures which painted the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, in an untruthful and disrespectful way. These errors were corrected by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

"…It was not Solomon who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved…"

Muslims must avoid a similar attitude whereby one observes those who appear worse than them in order to justify their own bad actions and speech. This attitude may make someone feel better but it will not aid them in this world or the next. Put simply, if a worldly judge does not excuse a criminal as they are worse criminals than them in this world neither will Allah, the Exalted, excuse a wrongdoer, even if they are worse wrongdoers than them. Each person will be held to a single standard, the standard set by Islam which is explained in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must avoid this negative attitude, which induces laziness, and instead compare themself to the standard of Islam in order to assess what positive character changes they need to make.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions how many from the children of Israel abandoned their divine scriptures and instead pursued knowledge which they misused for the sake of worldly gain. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

"…but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and that which was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt. But they [i.e., the

two angels] do not teach anyone unless they say, "We are a trial, so do not disbelieve [by practicing magic]." And [yet] they learn from them that by which they cause separation between a man and his wife…"

As the knowledge granted to the two Angels and the black magic taught by the Devils have been separated, it is clear that the two Angels did not come to teach people black magic. They instead were granted knowledge which either counteracted black magic or some other type of divine knowledge. It is hard to believe that Angels would teach something evil to people. The structure of the verse suggests that the Devils taught people black magic from the knowledge they possessed and intentionally misinterpreted the knowledge given to the two Angels in order to further misguide people through the use of black magic. Intentionally misinterpreting divine knowledge is what the two Angels warned people against in verse 102. This is easy to understand, as knowledge designed for a good purpose can be misused if possessed by the wrong person. For example, science was revealed to mankind in order to benefit them, such as discovering and manufacturing medicines which cure diseases. But that same scientific knowledge in the wrong hands can be used for evil, such as producing weapons. Divine knowledge is the same. In the right hands it can be used to benefit people in both worlds but in the wrong hands it can be used for evil purposes. This is one of the interpretations of the following verse. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

"And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss."

The Holy Quran leads to benefit in both worlds when understood and correctly acted upon. Whereas, it can lead to loss in both worlds when one intentionally misinterprets it for worldly gain.

This discussion is further supported by the fact that many people even in this day and age behave in this manner. Their black magic often consists of good divine knowledge twisted out of context and combined with devilish knowledge. Secondly, the two Angels could have only discussed the concept of black magic with people in order to show them the difference between it and the miracles of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, such as the miracle of the Holy Prophet Suleiman, peace be upon him, when he was given the ability to control supernatural creatures. This does not mean they taught black magic but only pointed out what it was thereby warning people to avoid it as it was disbelief. This has always been an acceptable form of teaching. Both these points are supported by the main verse under discussion as it does not state that the two Angels taught black magic to people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

“…but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and that which was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt. But they [i.e., the two angels] do not teach anyone unless they say, "We are a trial, so do not disbelieve [by practicing magic]." And [yet] they learn from them that by which they cause separation between a man and his wife. But they do not harm anyone through it except by permission of Allāh…”

The end of this quoted verse makes a powerful reality crystal clear. Nothing in this universe occurs without the will of Allah, the Exalted, whether it is big thing, such as the rising of the Sun, or something small, such as the fluttering of a leaf in the wind. The one who believes this truth will therefore understand that the entire creation cannot give them something unless Allah, the Exalted, wills it, nor can the entire creation take something from them unless Allah, the Exalted, allows it. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 2:

"Whatever Allāh grants to people of mercy - none can withhold it; and whatever He withholds - none can release it thereafter. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise."

Understanding and accepting this fact will prevent one from fearing the creation and the evil found within the world, such as black magic. If any harm affects them, they will understand that Allah, the Exalted, allowed it to occur because of wisdoms that may not be apparent to them, such as them obtaining an uncountable reward by facing the difficulty with patience. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one's words or actions and maintaining sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. If they are protected from harm, then that only comes through the will of Allah, the Exalted, and they therefore show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Gratitude involves ensuring one's intention is to always please Allah, the Exalted. A sign of this is that they do not hope for nor expect any gratitude from people. Gratitude also involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. Finally, gratitude involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah,

the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner will never become paranoid over the potential evil which can affect them, which in turn will protect them from con artists who claim to fix the spiritual and worldly problems of people for a fee.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

“…but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and that which was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt. But they [i.e., the two angels] do not teach anyone unless they say, "We are a trial, so do not disbelieve [by practicing magic]." And [yet] they learn from them that by which they cause separation between a man and his wife. But they do not harm anyone through it except by permission of Allah. And they [i.e., people] learn what harms them and does not benefit them. But they [i.e., the Children of Israel] certainly knew that whoever purchased it [i.e., magic] would not have in the Hereafter any share. And wretched is that for which they sold themselves, if they only knew.”

This verse makes it clear that practicing anything associated with black magic is disbelief. It is not only a major sin. Faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience and protected from poisonous characteristics and actions. The same way a plant can die if it fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, and is not protected from harmful substances, the faith of a person can die when they fail to perform acts of obedience and if they persist on certain sins, such as practicing black magic. The one who behaves in this manner is only selling their peace of mind and success in

both worlds for trouble and punishment in both worlds. The one who associates with black magic will therefore lose out in both worlds, even if their loss in this world is not obvious to them, as worldly punishment is often subtle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

"…*And wretched is that for which they sold themselves, if they only knew."*

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, classified practicing black magic as one of the destructive sins. Meaning, if one does not sincerely repent it may well cause them to enter Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2766. Practicing black magic is also a deadly major sin as the one who practices it believes it can change the decree of Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, it can rival and challenge the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted, which is clear unbelief. Therefore, Muslims must avoid this deadly major sin at all costs.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

"…but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and that which was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt. But they [i.e., the two angels] do not teach anyone unless they say, "We are a trial, so do not disbelieve [by practicing magic]." And [yet] they learn from them that by which they cause separation between a man and his wife. But they do not harm anyone through it except by permission of Allah. And they [i.e., people] learn

what harms them and does not benefit them. But they [i.e., the Children of Israel] certainly knew that whoever purchased it [i.e., magic] would not have in the Hereafter any share. And wretched is that for which they sold themselves, if they only knew."

Generally speaking, this verse makes it clear that the one who purposely interprets divine knowledge for the sake of worldly gain will gain nothing but trouble and stress in both worlds. The very worldly things they obtain through this attitude will become a source of stress and misery for them in both worlds, as they have forgotten the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. And what comes in the hereafter is far worse, unless they sincerely repent Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

This is quite evident when one observes those who compromise on the teachings of Islam for the sake of worldly gain.

The final part of verse 102 makes it clear that ignorance is a root cause of committing major sins, which can lead to one's suffering and misery in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

"…And wretched is that for which they sold themselves, if they only knew."

One must therefore avoid ignorance, as gaining Islamic knowledge is a duty on every muslim according to the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. One must gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they easily recognize sins and negative characteristics and therefore avoid them. The one who adopts ignorance as their way will easily commit sins and adopt negative characteristics, as they are unaware of them and their seriousness.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that one should avoid intentionally misinterpreting divine knowledge for the sake of worldly gain so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. As indicated by this verse, they must support their verbal declaration of belief with actions, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 103:

"And if they had believed and feared Allāh, then the reward from Allāh would have been [far] better, if they only knew."

One must adopt this right attitude even if it contradicts their desires, as it is best for them in both worlds. They must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts upon the advice of their medical doctor despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicine and a strict diet plan which contradicts their desires. Only through this positive attitude will a person achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 103:

“And if they had believed and feared Allāh, then the reward from Allāh would have been [far] better, if they only knew.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 104

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَقُولُواْ رَٰعِنَا وَقُولُواْ ٱنظُرۡنَا وَٱسۡمَعُواْۗ وَلِلۡكَٰفِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٞ ١٠٤

“O you who have believed, say not [to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "Rāʿinā" but say, "Unẓurnā" and listen. And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment.”

When Allah, the Exalted, makes an announcement to the believers within the Holy Quran He connects it to acts of practical obedience. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 104:

"*O you who have believed, say not…*"

This indicates the importance of actualizing one's verbal declaration of faith in Allah, the Exalted, with actions. These actions are the proof one needs in order to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Failing to actualize one's verbal declaration of faith is as pointless as a student who returns a blank exam paper to their teacher and claims that as the knowledge is within their mind they do not need to show their knowledge through actions by answering the exam questions. The same way this student will be failed by their teacher so will the muslim who fails to support their verbal claim of faith with actions. Even though Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of the strength of one's faith, none the less, He has commanded people to prove their verbal declaration of faith with actions.

In addition, the one who fails to actualize their faith should fear losing it. Faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience. The same way a plant that fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, will die, so may well the faith of a person who fails to nourish it with acts of obedience. This is the greatest loss.

Many from the people of the book could not openly insult and cause harm to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, out of fear of the consequences. As a result they came up with devious plans in order to covertly insult and cause harm to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, they adopted a two faced character whereby they would verbally claim to adhere to the peace treaty they agreed upon with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet they incited the enemies of Islam against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Another devious plan, which is mentioned in the main verse under discussion, is how they would purposely mispronounce certain words which would then turn them into insults when they addressed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 104:

"*O you who have believed, say not [to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "Rāʿinā" but say, "Unẓurnā"…"*

As a response, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to abandon using the words which could be turned

into insults by mispronouncing them, an example of which is mentioned in verse 104.

Muslims must avoid adopting the attitude of the people of the book who adopted insincerity towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Instead one must strive to adopt sincerity to all other people, irrespective of their faith, as this is an important aspect of Islam. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 196. This is best achieved when one treats others in a way they wish others to treat them.

Allah, the Exalted, also commands the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to listen carefully to the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 104:

“O you who have believed, say not [to Allāh's Messenger], "Rāʿinā" but say, "Unẓurnā" and listen…”

The word the people of the book would mispronounce was used by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the same way a student asks their teacher to slow down and repeat what they have taught them. When it was mispronounced it became an insult. So Allah, the Exalted, commanded them to use a different word which could not be mispronounced

and to listen carefully so that they would not need to ask the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to repeat himself. Generally speaking, one must always listen carefully to any good knowledge. Listening involves hearing what has been said, processing the information in one's mind by reflecting on how it can be applied in their life and striving to implement it. Sadly, many believe that simply hearing Islamic knowledge is enough to obtain success. Hearing does not lead to adopting the teachings one has heard whereas listening does. Islam commands one to listen, not just hear Islamic knowledge. Failing to listen correctly is one of the major reasons why muslims fail to act on the teachings of Islam despite the fact that Islamic knowledge is more widely available and listened to than ever before.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 104:

"O you who have believed, say not [to Allāh's Messenger], "Rāʿinā" but say, "Unẓurnā" and listen…"

This verse also teaches muslims to speak in a clear and upright manner. Meaning, one should avoid speaking in an ambiguous way which could be taken in the wrong way by others. This can often lead to fractured and broken relationships, especially amongst relatives. A muslim must always speak in a good and clear manner or remain silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 70:

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 104:

“O you who have believed, say not [to Allāh's Messenger], "Rāʿinā" but say, "Unẓurnā" and listen. And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment.”

Generally speaking, this verse also warns the muslims not to imitate the behaviour of non-muslims. Meaning, one must strictly adhere to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoid practicing on things which are not rooted in these two sources of guidance. The more one acts on other sources, even if they lead to permissible deeds, the less they will act upon the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 104:

“O you who have believed, say not [to Allāh's Messenger], "Rāʿinā" but say, "Unẓurnā" and listen. And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment.”

In addition, a muslim must avoid disrespecting the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As indicated by verse 104, this is an act of disbelief. This can occur when one intentionally ignores his commands and advice simply because they contradict one’s desires. A muslim must instead submit wholeheartedly to the commands, prohibitions and advice of Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 65:

“But no, by your Lord, they will not [truly] believe until they make you, judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have judged and submit in [full, willing] submission.”

A muslim must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan, as they know this is best for their mental and physical health. But if one behaves like a foolish patient who ignores the advice given by their doctor then they will obtain nothing except poor mental and physical health. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 104:

“…And for the disbelievers is a painful punishment.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 105

مَّا يَوَدُّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَـٰبِ وَلَا ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَن يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّنْ
خَيْرٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَٱللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ وَٱللَّهُ ذُو ٱلْفَضْلِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ

"Neither those who disbelieve from the People of the Scripture [the Jews and Christians] nor the polytheists wish that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord. But Allah selects for His mercy whom He wills, and Allah is the possessor of great bounty."

Allah, the Exalted, highlights the jealous nature of those who disbelieved by rejecting Islam despite recognizing its truthfulness. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 105:

"*Neither those who disbelieve from the People of the Scripture [the Jews and Christians] nor the polytheists wish that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord…"*

The scholars from the people of the book clearly recognized the truthfulness of Islam as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran had been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

The people of the book were jealous of the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a descendant of the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, instead of being a descendant of his brother, the Holy Prophet Ishaaq, peace be upon him, as they were. As their whole religion had been adapted around the importance of lineage, which according to them gave them their superiority over the rest of mankind, they could not accept and follow a Holy Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, who was from a different lineage. This would only destroy their superiority complex they had fabricated.

As the non-muslims of Mecca were masters of the Arabic language they knew the Holy Quran were not the words of a created being. And as they had spent forty years with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prior his announcement of Prophethood, they knew he was no liar. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

“…for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"

The noblemen from the non-muslims of Mecca could not live with accepting and following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was a poor orphan, despite the fact he belonged to the noblest tribe. As they desired leadership, control and wealth, they became jealous when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

announced Prophethood and was given leadership and superiority over all of creation.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 105:

"*Neither those who disbelieve from the People of the Scripture [the Jews and Christians] nor the polytheists wish that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord…"*

Generally speaking, envy is a deadly major sin as it can easily cause one to reject the truth and correct path in both religious and worldly matters. A person who rejects the truth and correct path will never find real success in this world or the next. In addition, it is a major sin as the envier's problem is actually with Allah, the Exalted, as He alone decides who is granted the worldly blessing they are envious over. So the envier behaves as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake by giving a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 105:

"…*But Allah selects for His mercy whom He wills…"*

A muslim must always remember this fact and therefore avoid envy. The evil type of envy is when one desires a blessing to be taken away from the envied

person and actively strives for this outcome. The lawful envy is when one desires a similar blessing to the one granted to someone else without wishing or striving for the envied person to lose the blessing they possess. Even though this type is lawful, it is blameworthy to possess this type over worldly matters and acceptable to possess it over religious matters. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, mentioned two examples of the acceptable type in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. The first person who can be lawfully envied is the one who obtains and utilizes lawful wealth in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The other person who can be lawfully envied is the one who correctly uses their knowledge and teaches it to people.

An envious person must remember that Allah, the Exalted, gives each person what is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

A muslim must instead busy themself in using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this alone will lead to peace of mind and success in both worlds and to further blessings. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…””

This fact has been indicated at the end of the main verse under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 105:

“…and Allah is the possessor of great bounty.”

Whereas, adopting unlawful envy will prevent one from obtaining peace of mind and it will lead to the destruction of their good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210. This will only lead to a loss of good in both worlds.

The muslim who receives worldly blessings which could be envied by others must remain steadfast on using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is the only way they will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds and be protected from the negative harms of their envier, even if this protection is not obvious to them. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 113 Al Falaq, verses 1 & 5:

“Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak…And [refuge] from the evil of an envier when he envies.""

In addition, they must always avoid pride over any worldly blessing they obtain as it has been created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 105:

“…*But Allah selects for His mercy whom He wills…”*

Therefore, possessing pride over a blessing which actually belongs to someone else is simply foolish.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 105:

“*Neither those who disbelieve from the People of the Scripture [the Jews and Christians] nor the polytheists wish that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord…*”

The good sent down specifically refers to the Holy Quran. This indicates that one will only obtain good in this world and in the next when they understand and act on its teachings. One must never believe simply reciting it in a language they do not understand is enough to achieve goodness in both worlds. The Holy Quran is a book of guidance, not a book of recitation. Guidance can only be obtained when one learns and acts on it, just like a map can only lead one to their desired destination when they act on it.

Generally speaking, the good mentioned in the main verse refers to any worldly blessing. But it is important to note that a worldly blessing will only become a source of goodness for a person in both worlds when they use it in the correct way. Meaning, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, misusing the worldly blessing will only cause it to become a source of stress, misery and difficulties for them in both world, as they have forgotten Allah, the Exalted, the true Owner of the blessing. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 106-107

۞ مَا نَنسَخْ مِنْ ءَايَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَآ أَوْ مِثْلِهَآ ۗ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَهُۥ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مِن وَلِىٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾

“We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth [one] better than it or similar to it. Do you not know that Allah is over all things competent?

Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and [that] you have not besides Allah any protector or any helper?”

The process of abrogation involves replacing a specific command or prohibition with another. This process is employed in many worldly circumstances also, such as when a medical doctor prescribes medicine. A doctor will often not prescribe the full dose of a medicine initially as they know their patient will not be able to tolerate it. They therefore, initially prescribe a lower dose and frequency intake and with the passing of time increase the dose and or frequency of use. This gradual build up allows for the human body to benefit from the medicine prescribed with minimal side effects. Allah, the Exalted, employed this technique in order to strengthen the faith of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, over time. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Quran was not revealed in one go. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 32:

“And those who disbelieve say, "Why was the Qur’ān not revealed to him all at once?" Thus [it is] that We may strengthen thereby your heart. And We have spaced it distinctly.”

An example of employing the abrogation technique is seen in the prohibition of alcohol. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 219:

“They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit."…”

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 43:

“O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying…”

And finally chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 90:

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

Alcohol was prohibited in stages, with the passing of time. Prohibiting it in one go would have had an adverse reaction to those who were addicted to it, which included most of the Arabs. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 106:

“We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth [one] better than it or similar to it…”

Therefore, criticizing the process of abrogation and attempting to use it as evidence against the authenticity of the Holy Quran is simply foolish, as

Allah, the Exalted, knows best how to educate His creation. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 106:

"…Do you not know that Allāh is over all things competent?"

Even if someone is not satisfied with this process, they have no say in the way Allah, the Exalted, manages His kingdom. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 107:

"*Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth…"*

Therefore, one must recognize their position within the universe as the powerless and insignificant slave of Allah, the Exalted, whose only purpose is to sincerely obey Him. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship [obey] Me."

This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, will find that the very worldly things they obtain through disobeying Him will become a source of their stress, anxiety and misery in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

One must never be fooled into believing they can disobey Allah, the Exalted, and somehow obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. As Allah,

the Exalted, controls the universe and the spiritual heart of a person, which is the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 107:

"…and [that] you have not besides Allāh any protector or any helper?"

This process of abrogation also refutes the claim of the people of the book that their divine scriptures and law had not been abrogated by the Holy Quran. Allah, the Exalted, revealed laws to each nation according to their circumstances and then abrogated all past laws with His final timeless law, which is explained in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This was obvious to the scholars from the people of the book as the final divine revelation, the Holy Quran, and the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 106-107:

“We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth [one] better than it or similar to it. Do you not know that Allāh is over all things competent? Do you not know that to Allāh belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and [that] you have not besides Allāh any protector or any helper?”

It is important to note that in Islamic studies the word abrogation is often used to mean clarification, even though they are two separate concepts. Abrogation means to replace a command and prohibition with a different one, whereas clarification is when a particular ruling is made clearer or more specific. When one understands the difference between the two definitions they will realize that only a very few, possibly only one, set of verses have been abrogated in the Holy Quran and the rest have only been clarified by other verses of the Holy Quran or the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Sadly, failing to differentiate between these two meanings has encouraged misguided people to claim many verses have been abrogated in the Holy Quran for the sake of worldly gain, such as power and wealth. People have been warned in the final part of verse 107 to avoid this attitude as they will have no protection or helper from the punishment of Allah, the Exalted, which will encircle them in both worlds, despite the worldly things they may possess. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 107:

“…*and [that] you have not besides Allāh any protector or any helper?”*

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 106:

“We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth [one] better than it or similar to it…”

Generally speaking, this verse also indicates that the Holy Quran was not revealed to make life harder for people. In fact, it was revealed to make life easier so that one finds peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 57:

“O mankind, there has come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers.”

For example, many of the negative effects of alcohol were not obvious to people when it was prohibited by the Holy Quran, such as its adverse effects on countless organs of the human body. It was only due to these negative effects that it was prohibited. Meaning, Allah, the Exalted, only commands and prohibits things which benefit people. A muslim must therefore accept

and act on the commands and prohibitions of the Holy Quran just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor, despite the fact they prescribe them bitter medicines and a strict diet plan, as they know their advice is best for them, even if it contradicts their desires or if the benefits of their advice are not obvious to them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 106:

“We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth [one] better than it or similar to it…”

This process of gradually strengthening the faith of a muslim with the passing of time also indicates the importance of understanding that Islam does not demand perfection from people nor does it demand them to become saints overnight. A muslim is expected to give regular time to and put sincere efforts into learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him. This process will cause a gradual yet persistent increase in the strength of their faith. The stronger one’s faith, the more they will obey Allah, the Exalted. This in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 106:

“We do not abrogate a verse or cause it to be forgotten except that We bring forth [one] better than it or similar to it…”

This verse also indicates the importance of constantly changing one’s behaviour positively whenever they learn something new from the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only an ignorant and stubborn person does not change when they learn new Islamic knowledge. A muslim must instead adopt a flexible attitude whereby they always submit and adapt their speech and actions according to any new Islamic knowledge they gain. Whereas, they will not alter their behaviour according to any other standard, such as culture, fashion and social media. From this point of view, the process of abrogation is a test to make evident who changes their attitude and behaviour when they learn new Islamic knowledge and who stubbornly refuses to, as the knowledge they already possess caters to their worldly desires.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 108

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَن تَسْـَٔلُوا۟ رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سُئِلَ مُوسَىٰ مِن قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَن يَتَبَدَّلِ ٱلْكُفْرَ
بِٱلْإِيمَٰنِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَآءَ ٱلسَّبِيلِ ﴿١٠٨﴾

"Or do you intend to ask your Messenger as Moses was asked before? And whoever exchanges faith for disbelief has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way."

Allah, the Exalted, warns muslims not to persist in asking irrelevant questions thereby troubling the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, just like the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, was troubled by his nation, the children of Israel. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 67-71:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "Indeed, Allāh commands you to slaughter a cow." They said, "Do you take us in ridicule?" He said, "I seek refuge in Allāh from being among the ignorant." They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is." [Moses] said, "[Allāh] says, 'It is a cow which is neither old nor virgin, but median between that,' so do what you are commanded." They said, "Call upon your Lord to show us what is her color." He said, "He says, 'It is a yellow cow, bright in color - pleasing to the observers.'" They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is. Indeed, [all] cows look alike to us. And indeed we, if Allāh wills, will be guided." He said, "He says, 'It is a cow neither trained to plow the earth nor to irrigate the field, one free from fault with no spot upon her.'" They said, "Now you have come with the truth." So they slaughtered her, but they could hardly do it.”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 108:

“Or do you intend to ask your Messenger as Moses was asked before?...”

As clearly indicated in the verses discussing the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, asking irrelevant questions only distracts people from concentrating on what is relevant to them, which in turn makes their life harder. This applies to both worldly and religious matters. A muslim must concentrate on researching and querying those issues which will be questioned about on Judgement Day. Anything else must be left aside as this will only distract them from the things they must be learning and acting on. As advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 3257, muslims must avoid asking pointless questions and instead concentrate on avoiding what they have been prohibited from and fulfilling what they have been commanded to do. Sadly, many muslims, even scholars, have fallen into discussing and arguing over irrelevant issues which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day. This attitude has only caused divisions within the Islamic nation despite the fact they were commanded to remain united. Persisting on this attitude only takes one away from relief belief, which is always connected to relevant issues and topics that will be questioned about on Judgement Day, towards disbelief, which has always been connected to irrelevant topics and issues. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 108:

"Or do you intend to ask your Messenger as Moses was asked before? And whoever exchanges faith for disbelief has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way. And whoever exchanges faith for disbelief has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way."

This verse could also be warning the people of the book and the non-muslims of Mecca from asking pointless questions in order to cause trouble for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and in order to prevent others from accepting Islam. The people of the book should have learned from their ancestors, the children of Israel, the importance of

avoiding asking irrelevant questions. As their scholars possessed the divine scriptures which discussed the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they was no need for them to behave in this manner as the truth of Islam was very clear to them. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

And the non-muslims of Mecca lived with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forty years prior to him announcing Prophethood and therefore knew he was no liar. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

“…for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"

And as they were masters of the Arabic language, they knew the Holy Quran were not the words of a created being otherwise they would have easily matched it in its ability to guide people irrespective of the level of their knowledge, their social status, the time they live in and its ability to solve every social, personal, financial and political issue a person or nation could ever face. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 23:

“And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down [i.e., the Qur’ān] upon Our Servant then produce a sūrah the like thereof and call upon your witnesses [i.e., supporters] other than Allāh, if you should be truthful.”

Those who pursued pointless issues in order to misguide others from Islam from the people of the book and the non-muslims of Mecca only exchanged the belief they were offered for disbelief. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 108:

“…And whoever exchanges faith for disbelief has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way.”

The one who strays from the right path will face nothing but difficulties in this world and their path will not end in Paradise in the next world, as they have forgotten the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using

the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 109-110

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ ٱلْكِتَٰبِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ إِيمَٰنِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِندِ أَنفُسِهِم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۖ فَٱعْفُوا۟ وَٱصْفَحُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِىَ ٱللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِۦٓ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾

وَأَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُوا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ ۚ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا۟ لِأَنفُسِكُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

“Many of the People of the Scripture wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of envy from themselves [even] after the truth has become clear to them. So pardon and overlook until Allah delivers His command. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent.

And establish prayer and give zakah, and whatever good you put forward for yourselves - you will find it with Allah. Indeed Allah, of what you do, is Seeing.”

As always, whenever Allah, the Exalted, criticizes a certain group He always makes it clear that not all members of that group acted in the same way. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 109:

“Many of the People of the Scripture…”

This indicates the importance of not judging an entire group based on the actions of some members of that group. Persisting on this attitude often leads to discrimination, such as racism, which is strictly prohibited in Islam.

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights the envy many from the people of the book possessed for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 109:

“*Many of the People of the Scripture wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of envy from themselves…”*

Behaving in this manner completely contradicts treating others with sincerity, which is an essential aspect of Islam according to the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 196. One must avoid this behaviour and instead adopt true

belief, which involves loving for others what one wishes for themself. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13.

The people of the book envied the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a descendant of the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, instead of being from their lineage, from the descendants of the brother of the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, the Holy Prophet Ishaaq, peace be upon them. As their whole faith was centered around their lineage, as they claimed it was their lineage which gave them superiority over the rest of mankind, they could not accept nor follow someone who belonged to a different lineage as this would make their false claim of being superior because of their blood clear for all to see. In addition, they envied the muslims as they too became carriers of divine revelation, something which the people of the book took great pride in. They could not bear sharing the spotlight with another nation. As a result, they wished the muslims would abandon their faith based on divine revelation and revert back to idol worshipping. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 109:

"*Many of the People of the Scripture wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of envy from themselves…"*

Envy is a major sin which must be avoided at all costs. It is a major sin as the envier directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. They behave as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake by granting a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. The one who allows their envy to strive verbally and physically against the one they envy will only destroy their own good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah,

number 4210. Lawful envy is when one wishes to obtain a similar blessing to someone else without the latter losing what they have been granted. Even though this type is lawful, yet it is only praiseworthy in religious matters and blameworthy in worldly matters. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised two cases of lawful and praiseworthy envy in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. One can envy the person who uses their knowledge correctly and teaches others it. The other person one can envy is the one who obtains lawful wealth and spends it in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

One must avoid envy by understanding that it is a major sin which challenges the distribution choice of Allah, the Exalted. They must understand that Allah, the Exalted, grants each person what is best for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Therefore, instead of envying others they must concentrate on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will lead to further blessings and peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, envying others will only cause one to forget obeying Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 109:

"*Many of the People of the Scripture wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of envy from themselves…"*

Generally speaking, this verse also indicates the importance of understanding that when one chooses a path which is rooted in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, they will always be criticized by others. Sadly, this criticism often comes from their own relatives. This occurs as the people wrongfully believe that as the person they criticize is choosing a path other than theirs it means that their path is an evil one. But the truth is the person does not believe this and only desires to pursue a different path as that is better for them. Sometimes, the root of their criticism is envy as they become envious over the fact that their relative is pursuing Islamic knowledge and will be seen by others as better than them. Through this experience one can determine who is truly sincere to them, as those who are sincere to them will encourage them to continue on their path, even if they do not understand the change in their attitude, as they clearly recognize it makes the person happy and as they are not doing any wrong. In cases like this, a muslim must remain firm on their new superior path and avoid being hindered by the criticism they face. They must instead continue to learn and act on Islamic teachings so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Only through this path will they will find peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Allah, the Exalted, criticized the people of the book for their envy and rejection of Islam despite the fact they recognized its truthfulness, as the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 109:

"Many of the People of the Scripture wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of envy from themselves [even] after the truth has become clear to them…"

Allah, the Exalted, then teaches the envied muslims to remain patient against the harm caused by their enviers, the people of the book, as Allah, the Exalted, would protect them from the negative affects of their envy and punish the enviers if they failed to sincerely repent. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 109:

"…So pardon and overlook until Allāh delivers His command. Indeed, Allāh is over all things competent."

The muslim who is envied must therefore remain patient against the verbal and physical actions of their envier and only defend themselves within the bounds of Islam. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one's speech and actions and maintaining one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is how one seeks refuge with Allah, the Exalted, from their envier. Chapter 113 Al Falaq, verses 1 and 5:

"Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak…And from the evil of an envier when he envies.""

Allah, the Exalted, will then protect them from the negative affects of their envier, even if this is not obvious to them, as Allah, the Exalted, acts according to His infinite knowledge and wisdom and not according to the very limited thinking of people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 109:

“…Indeed, Allāh is over all things competent.”

Aspects of maintaining one’s sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, are then mentioned. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 110:

“And establish prayer…”

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling them with their full conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. Establishing the obligatory prayers is often repeated in the Holy Quran as it is the most important practical proof of one’s faith in Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as the daily prayers are all spread out, they act as a constant reminder of the Day of Judgement and practically preparing for it, as each stage of the obligatory prayer is connected to Judgement Day. When one stands up right, this is how they will stand in front of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verses 4-6:

“Do they not think that they will be resurrected. For a tremendous Day The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?”

When they bow, it reminds them of the many people who will be criticized on Judgement Day for not bowing to Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. Chapter 77 Al Mursalat, verse 48:

“And when it is said to them, "Bow [in prayer]," they do not bow.”

This criticism also includes not practically submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of one’s life. When one prostrates in the prayer, it reminds them of how people will be invited to prostrate to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. But those who did not prostrate correctly to Him during their lives on Earth will not be able to do this on Judgement Day. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verses 42-43:

"On the Day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so. Their eyes humbled, humiliation will cover them. And they used to be invited to prostration while they were sound.”

When one sits on their knees in the prayer, it reminds them of how they will be sitting in this position in front of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement, fearing their final judgement. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 28:

“And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do.”"

The one who prays with these elements in mind will establish their prayers correctly. This in turn will ensure they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in between the prayers. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

“…Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing…”

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Allah, the Exalted, often connects establishing the prayers with offering the obligatory charity. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 110:

“…and give zakah…”

The obligatory charity is only a tiny portion of one’s overall income and is only given when one possesses a fixed amount. One of the aims of donating the obligatory charity is that it reminds a muslim that the wealth they possess does not belong to them, otherwise they would be free to spend it how they wished. The wealth was created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and therefore must be used according to His pleasure. In fact, every blessing one possesses is only a loan which must be repaid to its rightful Owner, Allah, the Exalted. This is achieved when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who fails to understand this truth and instead behaves as if the blessings they were granted, such as their wealth, belongs to them and therefore refrains from donating the obligatory charity, will face a penalty, just like the one who fails to repay a worldly loan faces a penalty. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on Judgement Day. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection…”

In this world, the very wealth they fail to donate the obligatory charity on will become a source of their stress and misery, as they failed to remember that Allah, the Exalted, has a right over the blessings He granted them. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Allah, the Exalted, then summarizes the importance of using every blessing one has been granted in His obedience, which involves using them according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 110:

"…and whatever good you put forward for yourselves - you will find it with Allāh…"

This reminds a muslims that they are only doing themself a favor when they use the blessings they have been granted correctly. They do not do a favor to Allah, the Exalted, or other people, as they directly benefit from obeying

Allah, the Exalted, in both this world and the next. The truth, which is often overlooked by many, is that when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, it ensures they benefit from it in this world, in their grave and on Judgement Day, meaning, it remains in their possession and supports them throughout these stages. Whereas, the one who misuses the blessings they have been granted will find that they become a source of stress and difficulties for them in this world, in their grave and on Judgement Day even though the thing will eventually slip out of their fingers, whether during their life or after their death. Put simply, the one who desires to keep the worldly blessings they have been granted and for them to become a source of peace for them in both worlds must use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 110:

"…and whatever good you put forward for yourselves - you will find it with Allāh…"

But whether one chooses to take the blessings they have been granted with them to the next world and for them to become a source of peace for them in both worlds, by using them correctly, or not, either way they will be held accountable for their choice, as nothing escapes the divine knowledge and sight of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 110:

"…Indeed Allāh, of what you do, is Seeing."

If they make the right choice, then they will receive favour and reward in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if they choose to misuse the blessings they have been granted, then they will become a source of their stress and misery in both worlds, as they forgot the One who granted them the blessings. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 111-112

وَقَالُوا۟ لَن يَدْخُلَ ٱلْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَـٰرَىٰ ۗ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ ۗ قُلْ هَاتُوا۟ بُرْهَـٰنَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَـٰدِقِينَ ﴿١١١﴾

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُۥ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُۥٓ أَجْرُهُۥ عِندَ رَبِّهِۦ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

“And they [people of the book] say, "None will enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian." That is [merely] their wishful thinking. Say, "Produce your proof, if you should be truthful."

Yes, [on the contrary], whoever submits his face [self] in Islam to Allah while being a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Despite the fact that the scholars from the people of the book understood and accepted that their divine teachings had been edited by misguided people and the fact that they clearly recognized the truthfulness of Islam, as the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been discussed in their divine scriptures, they still rejected Islam while claiming they were rightly guided. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

But what angered Allah, the Exalted, more was the fact that they misguided their ignorant followers into rejecting Islam also. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 111:

"And they [people of the book] say, "None will enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian."…"

But their claim was nothing but wishful thinking and it therefore had no value in the sight of Allah, the Exalted. Wishful thinking is always tied to persisting in disobeying Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings one has been granted. Whereas, real hope in the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is always tied to His obedience. This difference has been explained in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. The people of the book adopted wishful thinking as they persisted on disobeying Allah, the Exalted, by rejecting Islam despite recognizing its truthfulness. They also adopted beliefs which directly challenged the fairness and justice of Allah, the Exalted. For example, they claimed that they were the favorites of Allah, the Exalted, because of their lineage. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 18:

"But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of Allāh and His beloved." Say, "Then why does He punish you for your sins?" Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills…."

This was a highly disrespectful attitude as it attributed racism and injustice to Allah, the Exalted, as they claimed He would treat the doer of good that was not from them equally to the evil doer from amongst them. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 21:

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.”

Their claim was therefore false as proven by the fact that their divine scriptures had been edited and by history itself. Whenever they persisted on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, they were punished. This has always been the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, which will never change for any nation. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 111:

“And they [people of the book] say, "None will enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian." That is [merely] their wishful thinking. Say, "Produce your proof, if you should be truthful."

Sadly, this type of wishful thinking has been adopted by many muslims who claim that as they are from the nation of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they are guaranteed salvation irrespective of their deeds. They fail to turn the pages of history to observe that the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, which involves punishing those who persist on His disobedience, irrespective of who they are, has never changed. This attitude therefore completely contradicts the teachings of Islam and must be avoided as it leads to abandoning sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This only leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact, which has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less, some muslims will still enter Hell. Even a moment in Hell is unbearable. In addition, the one who adopts wishful thinking and therefore abandons obeying Allah, the Exalted, runs the risk of losing their faith before their death, which is the greatest loss. Faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience. The same way a plant will die if it fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, so may well the faith of a person who fails to nourish their faith with acts of obedience. Therefore, it is vital for one to avoid wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, which is rooted in His sincere obedience.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 111:

“And they [people of the book] say, "None will enter Paradise except one who is a Jew or a Christian." That is [merely] their wishful thinking. Say, "Produce your proof, if you should be truthful."”

This verse also indicates the importance of basing one’s beliefs and actions on clear evidence. People must therefore avoid behaving like cattle by blindly following others in adopting their beliefs and actions, especially in religious matters. One must strive to learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they base their beliefs and actions on solid evidence. This will ensure they remain firm on the teachings of Islam under every circumstance, as the ignorant muslim easily disobeys Allah, the Exalted, when their desires are contradicted. In addition, beliefs and actions that are based on ignorance or blind imitation always lead to deviation, such as adopting wishful thinking, and the introduction of innovations within faith. Both of these are destructive to a person’s faith and must be avoided by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Allah, the Exalted, then explains the importance of actualizing one’s faith through actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 112:

“*Yes, [on the contrary], whoever submits his face [self] in Islam to Allah while being a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord…”*

This verse, like countless others, makes it clear that simply claiming faith with the tongue is not enough to achieve success. One must support their verbal claim of faith with good actions. Even though Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of the inward state of a person, none the less, He has commanded one to demonstrate their inward faith outwardly through physical actions of obedience. Without actions, words have very little value in Islam. One must therefore sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one obtains peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 112:

"*Yes, [on the contrary], whoever submits his face [self] in Islam to Allah while being a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord…"*

This verse also indicates that submission and obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is only acceptable to Him when it is according to Islamic teachings, meaning, according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One must therefore avoid all other sources of knowledge, even if they lead to good deeds, as the more one acts on other sources of knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 112:

"*Yes, [on the contrary], whoever submits his face [self] in Islam to Allah while being a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord…"*

The structure of this verse also indicates the importance of not compartmentalizing one's faith whereby they only act on the teachings of Islam when it suits them. Islam is not like a coat which can be put on and taken off according to one's desires. Islam is a complete way of life which must be submitted to in every situation and when dealing with every blessing one has been granted, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whoever behaves in this manner has truly submitted their face in Islam to Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, will then protect them from extreme emotions, such as fear and grief, which can lead to poor mental health and the loss of peace of mind. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 112:

“…And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Even though a muslim who behaves correctly will still face difficulties in this world, as this world is the abode of tests and trials, none the less, through their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, they will be protected from extreme emotions which can encourage one to become ungrateful and impatient with Allah, the Exalted. Instead, they will face stress and sadness but they will overcome these emotions so that they remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As a result, they will journey through every situation with peace of mind until they reach the hereafter safely. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 69:

“And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways…”

A muslim must remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even if their desires are contradicted, as this is best for their mental and physical wellbeing in both worlds. They must behave like the wise patient who accepts the bitter medicine and strict diet plan prescribed by their medical doctor, knowing it is best for them, despite the fact this advice contradicts their desires.

On the other hand, the person who fails to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, will find that they are regularly overcome by extreme emotions caused by the different situations they face, even if they happen to have moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

This will lead to countless mental problems, such as depression, extreme mood swings and even suicidal tendencies. But what comes in the hereafter for them will be far worse, unless they sincerely repent. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 113

وَقَالَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ ٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَىْءٍ وَقَالَتِ ٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ لَيْسَتِ ٱلْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَىْءٍ وَهُمْ
يَتْلُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ كَذَٰلِكَ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ فَٱللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ
فِيمَا كَانُوا۟ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

“The Jews say, "The Christians have nothing [true] to stand on," and the Christians say, "The Jews have nothing to stand on," although they [both] recite the Scripture. Thus do those who know not speak the same as their words. But Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ.”

Allah, the Exalted, criticizes the people of the book, the Jews and Christians, who claimed that the other's faith is based on no solid evidence or proof. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 113:

"*The Jews say, "The Christians have nothing [true] to stand on," and the Christians say, "The Jews have nothing to stand on," although they [both] recite the Scripture…"*

In reality, neither of their beliefs were based on solid divine proof as both their scriptures had been edited by misguided people, something neither group denied. Their scholars, who were well versed in their scriptures, clearly recognized the divine origin of the Holy Quran, as they were familiar with its Author and the fact that both the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were discussed in their divine scriptures, yet they still rejected Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

Generally speaking, one must not adopt their behaviour which involves criticizing the attitude of others while being oblivious to one’s own misguided attitude. A person must not adopt an attitude which is not based on knowledge and evidence in both worldly and religious matters. They must instead learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that their beliefs and actions are based on solid evidence and right guidance before worrying about the beliefs and attitude of others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 113:

“*The Jews say, "The Christians have nothing [true] to stand on," and the Christians say, "The Jews have nothing to stand on," although they [both] recite the Scripture…”*

In addition, this verse criticizes knowledge which is not supported by actions. Both the scholars from the people of the book were learned in their scriptures yet failed to act on them. A muslim must understand that knowledge without actions has very little value in Islam. Just like knowledge to a destination will not cause one to reach it until they act on the knowledge, neither will Islamic knowledge take a muslim towards peace of mind and success in both worlds until they act on it. By extension, they must also avoid blindly reciting the Holy Quran without understanding its meaning, as this will prevent them from acting on it also. The Holy Quran is not a book of recitation, it is a book of guidance. Guidance is only obtained through acting on correct knowledge, not through knowledge alone.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 113:

"*The Jews say, "The Christians have nothing [true] to stand on," and the Christians say, "The Jews have nothing to stand on," although they [both] recite the Scripture…"*

This verse also makes clear that their faith was not based on solid evidence instead their stance against others was based on blind loyalty to their own side. Blind loyalty to people is a highly disliked characteristic to adopt as it always leads to misguidance. For example, the whole concept of gangs is based on blind loyalty to one another. Blind loyalty will prevent one from supporting the truth if it means supporting those who are not on their side and it prevents one from warning against what is wrong if it is connected to their own side and people. Sadly, this highly disliked attitude is even found in many muslim scholars whose blind loyalty to their teachers and school of thought prevents them from supporting the Islamic interpretations given by other scholars from different schools of thought despite the fact they secretly agree with them. Instead, their blind loyalty encourages them to criticize other schools of thought, just like the Christians and Jews criticized each other. A scholar whose very function is to teach the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in an unbiased way then teaches them according to the ideology of their school of thought despite the fact that the knowledge they have gained in some cases disagrees with the ideology of their school of thought. It is vital for a muslim to respect their teachers but they must never adopt blind loyalty to them or others. They must follow in the footsteps of the Companions, may

Allah be pleased with them, by only possessing loyalty to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is the reason why they were not shy to respectfully disagree with each other, as they did not blindly follow one another. An example of this is discussed in Hadiths found in Sahih Bukhari, numbers 7284 and 7285, where Umar Ibn Khattab respectfully questioned and challenged the opinion of his leader, the Caliph Abu Bakkar Siddique, may Allah be pleased with them. The one who adopts the right attitude will adopt sincerity to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhamma, peace and blessings be upon him, and therefore correctly act on them, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

Another point must be understood. A Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates certain beliefs should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always correct thereby criticizing and hating those who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars, a Muslim following a particular school of thought should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what their school of thought believes and advocates.

One of the reasons why the anger of Allah, the Exalted, upon the scholars from the people of the book was so intense is due to the fact that they misguided their ignorant followers when they rejected Islam despite recognizing its truthfulness. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 113:

“The Jews say, "The Christians have nothing [true] to stand on," and the Christians say, "The Jews have nothing to stand on," although they [both] recite the Scripture. Thus do those who know not speak the same as their words…”

It is essential for a muslim to only advocate what is right and good in respect to both worldly and religious matters as the one who misguides people will get the same sin recorded against them that their followers commit based on their bad advice and guidance. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674. Instead, one must learn and act on the truth in all cases and advocate this to others so that they gain the same reward their followers earn when they act on their good advice.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 113:

“The Jews say, "The Christians have nothing [true] to stand on," and the Christians say, "The Jews have nothing to stand on," although they [both] recite the Scripture. Thus do those who know not speak the same as their words…”

In addition, this verse criticizes blindly following others as it is one of the main sources of misguidance. A person must avoid acting like cattle by blindly following others and instead learn and act on useful knowledge, in both worldly and religious matters, so that they achieve right guidance in all their

affairs. Islam criticizes acting like cattle and has always encouraged muslims to learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they live with insight and understanding instead of blind imitation. This is one of the reasons why it is a duty on all muslims to gain Islamic knowledge. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….""

Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 9:

“…Say, "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding.”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 113:

“The Jews say, "The Christians have nothing [true] to stand on," and the Christians say, "The Jews have nothing to stand on," although they [both] recite the Scripture. Thus do those who know not speak the same as their words…”

Those who fail to learn and act on Islamic teachings so that their behaviour and actions are based on solid evidence, those who misguide others through their bad advice and those who blindly follow others will face the consequences of their attitude in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 113:

“The Jews say, "The Christians have nothing [true] to stand on," and the Christians say, "The Jews have nothing to stand on," although they [both] recite the Scripture. Thus do those who know not speak the same as their words. But Allāh will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ.”

Generally speaking, no matter what path a person chooses in this world, which differs from the path of others, they will face the consequences of their choice. Therefore, one must ensure they choose the correct path so that their final judgement is in their favor on Judgement Day. This correct path involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who makes the right choice will be granted peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who ignores their final judgement will undoubtedly choose the wrong path, which involves misusing the blessings they have been granted. As a result, they will face stress, difficulties and trouble in both worlds, as they forgot to obey the Creator and Owner of the blessings they possess. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 114

وَمَنۡ أَظۡلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسَٰجِدَ ٱللَّهِ أَن يُذۡكَرَ فِيهَا ٱسۡمُهُۥ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَآۚ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمۡ أَن يَدۡخُلُوهَآ إِلَّا خَآئِفِينَۚ لَهُمۡ فِي ٱلدُّنۡيَا خِزۡيٞ وَلَهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٞ ١١٤

“And who are more unjust than those who prevent the name of Allah from being mentioned [i.e., praised] in His mosques and strive toward their destruction. It is not for them to enter them except in fear. For them in this world is disgrace, and they will have in the Hereafter a great punishment.”

Allah, the Exalted, criticizes the non-muslims of Mecca, who were very proud of the fact they were custodians of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 114:

“And who are more unjust than those who prevent the name of Allah from being mentioned [i.e., praised] in His mosques…”

As they would hinder the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from worshipping Allah, the Exalted, there, even though this violated their own longstanding rule, which allowed anyone, whether friend of foe, to freely worship within the sacred Mosque in Mecca. For example, Abu Jahl, the non-Muslim uncle of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared that if he observed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, praying within the sacred Mosque in Mecca, the Kaaba, he would trample on his neck while he was in prostration. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, began to pray, Abu Jahl approached him in order to carry out his evil plan but he quickly hastened away, fleeing like a donkey from a wild predator. When questioned about his actions, he replied that he observed a ditch of fire, full of terror and wings, which appeared between him and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, later commented that if Abu Jahl persisted with his plan, the Angels would have torn him to pieces. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7065.

By preventing the worship of Allah, the Exalted, at His House, the non-muslims of Mecca were in reality destroying it and its sanctity. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 114:

"*And who are more unjust than those who prevent the name of Allah from being mentioned [i.e., praised] in His mosques and strive toward their destruction…"*

Generally speaking, the purpose of Mosques includes worshipping Allah, the Exalted, and studying, learning and teaching the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and every muslim must therefore strive to fulfil their purpose. Sadly, many Muslims have turned Mosques into social clubs for worldly conversations, places to glorify people instead of Allah, the Exalted and to teach knowledge not connected to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner only strives against their purpose and the criticism in this verse therefore applies to them also. Building a Mosque is not enough, muslims must ensure its purpose is achieved. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 125:

"…And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform ṭawāf [circumambulation] and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer]."”

Behaving in this manner is a part of fearing Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 114:

"…It is not for them to enter them except in fear…"

The one who possesses the fear of Allah, the Exalted, will ensure they strive to fulfil the purpose of Mosques. But the one who fails to fulfil their purpose, just like the non-muslims of Mecca done, by using it as a place of socializing over worldly matters, glorifying people instead of Allah, the Exalted, and teaching religious knowledge other than the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will find nothing but disgrace in both worlds as they have behaved as rude guests of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 114:

"…For them in this world is disgrace, and they will have in the Hereafter a great punishment."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 115

وَلِلَّهِ ٱلْمَشْرِقُ وَٱلْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا۟ فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ ٱللَّهِ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾

"And to Allah belongs the east and the west. So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah. Indeed, Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing."

This verse was an indication of the changing of the focal point of the Muslims during prayer, which changed from Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem to Masjid Al Haraam in Mecca. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 144:

“We have certainly seen the turning of your face, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qiblah with which you will be pleased. So turn your face [i.e., yourself] toward al-Masjid al-Ḥarām…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 115:

“And to Allāh belongs the east and the west…”

As Allah, the Exalted, owns all aspects of this world, a person has no choice but to yield to His law. A person who dislikes a particular law within a community or country is free to migrate to a land that law does not apply. But as the entire creation belongs to Allah, the Exalted, there is nowhere a person can migrate to escape His law or control. One must therefore obey it for their own sake. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him. A person must always remember that the law of Allah, the Exalted, benefits them, even if they are unaware of the wisdoms behind His decrees. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 157:

“Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written [i.e., described] in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and prohibits them from what is wrong and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them…”

A person must accept and act on the law of Allah, the Exalted, knowing its best for them, despite the fact it may contradict their desires, just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor knowing its best for them despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Behaving in this manner leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Otherwise, just like a patient who refuses to accept and act on the advice of their doctor will face mental and physical problems so will the person who fails to accept and act on the law of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that the focal point is simply a direction to nurture unity amongst the Muslims and the divine presence of Allah, the Exalted, is therefore not in any one direction. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 115:

"*And to Allah belongs the east and the west. So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah…"*

Remembering this reality will aid a muslim to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, at all times, knowing He is observing their intention, speech and actions at all times, not just when they perform the prayer. The one who focuses their energy on this reality will eventually obtain excellence of faith whereby they do things, such as worshipping Allah, the Exalted, as if they can observe Allah, the Exalted, watching them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 99. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 115:

“…*Indeed, Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.”*

Whereas, the one who forgets this reality will only obey Allah, the Exalted, when they offer the prayers and disobey Him outside of them, by misusing the blessings they have been granted. Compartmentalizing one’s faith in this way will only encourage one to abandon obeying Allah, the Exalted, whenever their desires are contradicted. Compartmentalizing one’s faith also prevents one from understanding that Islam is a way of life which effects every situation a person faces and how they use every blessing they have been granted. Instead, they will observe their faith as a few rituals which have no impact on the other aspects of their life. This in turn leads to misguidance and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 116-117

وَقَالُوا۟ ٱتَّخَذَ ٱللَّهُ وَلَدًا ۗ سُبْحَـٰنَهُۥ ۖ بَل لَّهُۥ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ كُلٌّ لَّهُۥ قَـٰنِتُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾

بَدِيعُ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰٓ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿١١٧﴾

“They say, "Allah has taken a son." Exalted is He! Rather, to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All are devoutly obedient to Him.

Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be," and it is.”

Allah, the Exalted, then criticizes the creed of Christians and some Jews who claimed Allah, the Exalted, had a biological son or adopted a human as His son. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 116:

“They say, "Allāh has taken a son." Exalted is He!...”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 30:

“The Jews say, "Ezra is the son of Allāh"; and the Christians say, "The Messiah is the son of Allāh." That is their statement from their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before [them]. May Allāh destroy them; how are they deluded?”

As indicated by this verse, their whole belief is based on nothing but blind imitation of their elders. A human must avoid acting like cattle, who blindly follow each other, as this leads to misguidance in both worldly and religious matters. A person must instead use their common sense, strive to gain useful knowledge and then act on it, even if it contradicts the behaviour and attitude of their elders. Islam has made it clear that muslims must base their beliefs and actions on solid evidence in every aspect of their lives, especially in religious matters. This is one of the major differences between Islam and all other religions and ways of life. Islam advocates people to use their common sense and base their decisions on solid evidence instead of blindly imitating others. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….””

And chapter 34 Saba, verse 46:

“Say, "I only advise you of one [thing] - that you stand for Allāh, [seeking truth] in pairs and individually, and then give thought."…”

The reasons for the spread of the false beliefs regarding the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, included his miraculous birth, the miracles which he performed and his ascension to the Heavens while alive. The Holy Quran confirms the miraculous birth of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and clearly describes his fatherless birth as a sign of the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 47:

“She [Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her] said, "My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?" [The angel] said, "Such is Allāh; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is.”

Allah, the Exalted, created the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, without a father, just like He created the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be

upon him, without a father or mother. This reality does not mean they are divine. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 59:

“Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, "Be," and he was.”

It is strange that the Christians believe that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, is the son of Allah, the Exalted, as he was born without a father. But they do not believe the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, to be the son of Allah, the Exalted, even though he was born without a father or mother. According to their mentality, the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, has more of a right of being called the son of Allah, the Exalted, than the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, yet they do not claim this. It is strange how they apply logic and common sense in the case of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, yet do not apply logic or common sense in the case of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him.

The miracles of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, have been verified by the Holy Quran. It however makes it clear that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, performed these miracles with the will, permission and command of Allah, the Exalted. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he would not need the will or permission of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 49:

“And [make the Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], 'Indeed I have come to you with a sign

from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allāh. And I cure the blind [from birth] and the leper, and I give life to the dead - by permission of Allāh. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses…"

The ascension of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, to the Heavens while alive further indicates the power of Allah, the Exalted, as He took the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, on this journey. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he could have undertaken this journey with his own innate power. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 55:

"[Mention] when Allāh said, "O Jesus, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify [i.e., free] you from those who disbelieve…""

The Holy Quran tells the Christians that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, contrary to their belief, was not crucified. The one whose image was seen on the cross was not the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, but someone who was made to look like him. Allah, the Exalted, had already raised the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, towards the Heavens by this time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verses 156-158:

"And for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander. And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of Allāh." And they did not kill him, nor did they

crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them…Rather, Allāh raised him to Himself.”

The incorrect Christian belief of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, being crucified meaning, killed, is strange in itself as a real divine being is far beyond experiencing death. If an entity can die, it cannot be divine. So in reality, their incorrect belief regarding his death by crucifixion negates their incorrect belief of his divinity by itself.

A divine being by nature is something which is self-sustaining meaning, they do not need someone else to sustain them. If a being is sustained by another then they cannot be divine. Both the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and his mother, Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her, were not divine beings as they required nourishment from Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they were not self-sustaining beings. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 75:

“The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a supporter of truth. They both used to eat food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.”

In addition, no one can claim that as the Angels do not eat they can be considered Gods. In reality, they are also sustained by Allah, the Exalted, in a different way so they too are not self-sustaining. The fact that they have been created and will experience death, just like the rest of creation, is enough to negate divinity.

A biological child will always share some characteristics with their parent. But in the case of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, he shares no qualities with Allah, the Exalted. In fact, all his characteristics are shared with other humans. He was created, he was sustained by food and water, he will die and be resurrected, just like all other humans. His characteristics are enough to negate divinity.

The Romans who adopted Christianity introduced the concept of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, being divine into their faith, concepts which they carried over from their former faith, paganism. They took a noble and blessed Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, and placed him with fables and myths, such as Zeus, Hercules and Oden. Only a little bit of common sense is required to understand that a being which is created, sustained by someone else and can die can never be divine, as these things contradict the quality of a divine being.

As indicated by the main verses under discussion, Allah, the Exalted, has no need to take a child, as He alone owns the entire creation, something which will not be passed onto another. A created being desires a child so that they aid and support them, especially during times of weakness, and to inherit from them when they eventually die. None of these or other possible reasons for taking a child apply to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 116-117:

“They say, "Allāh has taken a son." Exalted is He! Rather, to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All are devoutly obedient to Him.

Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be," and it is.”

The one who reflects on the Heavens and the Earth and their construction will clearly recognize the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted. If a simple building cannot be constructed correctly without a builder, how can the perfect systems within the Heavens and the Earth, such as the water cycle, the perfect density of the oceans and seas, the perfect density of the Earth, the perfect distance the Sun is from the Earth and the perfect altitude of the land, be constructed without a Creator? In addition, if there were multiple Gods then it would lead to utter chaos for the creation, as each God would desire something different. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined…”

Therefore, as indicated by the main verses under discussion, a little reflection on the creation of the Heavens and the Earth is enough to negate divinity to all except Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, alone created the creation, including the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, Allah, the Exalted, sustains the creation, decrees death for them and will resurrect them in order to judge their actions, all through a single command, be and it is.

To conclude, the main verses demonstrate how and why the attributes of perfection are specific for Allah, the Exalted, alone. Firstly, all that exists in the Heavens and Earth belong to Allah, the Exalted, alone. Secondly, everything is also subservient to Him, unwillingly or willingly, meaning, nothing can challenge His authority or control. Thirdly, He is the Creator and Sustainer of the Heavens and Earth. Fourthly, His power of creation is so mighty that He does not need instruments or helpers. He only commands a thing and it occurs. These four qualities are not found in anyone except Allah, the Exalted. If He had offspring they would at least share one of these qualities with Him but no creature can or ever will possess any of them. In fact, even those who attributed offspring to Him believed in this truth. Therefore, their own belief contradicts their claim of Him having offspring.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 116-117:

“…Rather, to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All are devoutly obedient to Him. Originator of the heavens and the earth. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, "Be," and it is.”

Generally speaking, these verses remind muslims that as Allah, the Exalted, alone created, sustains and controls the entire creation, as no one can escape His decrees and they therefore submit to them whether they like it or not, therefore He alone must be obeyed. It is foolish to believe one can achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds while disobeying Allah, the Exalted, the Originator and Controller of all things, including the abode of peace of mind, the spiritual heart. If one actualizes this reality they will sincerely obey Him, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to actualize this reality will disobey Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted. This leads to stress, trouble and difficulties in both worlds, even if one possesses the entire

world, as they cannot escape the control and power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 118-119

وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا ٱللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَآ ءَايَةٌ ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن
قَبْلِهِم مِّثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ ۘ تَشَٰبَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۗ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا ٱلْءَايَٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

إِنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَٰكَ بِٱلْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا ۖ وَلَا تُسْـَٔلُ عَنْ أَصْحَٰبِ ٱلْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٩﴾

“Those who do not know say, "Why does Allah not speak to us or there come to us a sign [miracle]?" Thus spoke those before them like their words. Their hearts resemble each other. We have shown clearly the signs to a people who are certain [in faith].

Indeed, We have sent you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] with the truth as a bringer of good tidings and a warner, and you will not be asked about the companions of Hellfire.”

Allah, the Exalted, begins these verses by criticizing ignorance and its people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 118:

“Those who do not know say…”

Ignorance is a disliked characteristic in both worldly and religious matters as it can only ever lead to misguidance. The one who does not know what is correct will always make the wrong choices in life. In religious matters, the ignorant person will always commit sins through their speech and actions as they are unaware of sins and their consequences. This is one of the reasons why gaining Islamic knowledge is a duty on all muslims. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. It is important to note that claiming ignorance in respect to one’s actions will not be accepted in the court of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who accepts Islam as their faith, has accepted the duties and responsibilities which come with it. Just like a licensed driver will not be pardoned for claiming ignorance, as they have accepted the responsibility of knowing the rules of driving, neither will a muslim be excused on Judgement Day if they claim ignorance. One must therefore strive to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they learn how to deal with every situation they face correctly and so that they use every blessing they have been granted correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This is the only way to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, ignorance will only cause one to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 118:

“Those who do not know say, "Why does Allāh not speak to us…””

As clearly indicated by this verse, ignorant people will say ignorant things. Allah, the Exalted, has spoken to each person indirectly through the Holy Quran. Directly conversing with Him is an element of the unseen which must remain so until Judgement Day. If the unseen things, such as Hell and Paradise, were revealed in this world, believing in them would not be difficult and it would therefore render faith meaningless, just like the acceptance of faith on Judgement Day by non-muslims will be meaningless. A muslim must therefore take advantage of the words of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, the Holy Quran, by studying and acting upon it before they reach a time when the unseen matters will be revealed to them and their actions, such as sincere repentance, will no longer benefit them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 118:

“Those who do not know say, "Why does Allāh not speak to us or there come to us a sign?"…”

In order to put off others from accepting Islam, the leaders of the non-muslims of Mecca, and even the scholars from the people of the book in Medina, would demand miracles from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The tradition of Allah, the Exalted, has never changed. When a nation disbelieved in the miracles that they requested, they were destroyed. As a result, Allah, the Exalted, avoided fulfilling their request for their own sake, as He knew they would not accept faith and would simply

claim they eyes were bewitched. For example, the non-Muslims of Mecca once asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to turn a mountain in Mecca, Mount Safa, into gold for them and to move away the mountains so that they could grow crops. He was told by Allah, the Exalted, that it was up to him to decide whether to give respite and ignore their foolish requests or if he desired, Allah, the Exalted, would fulfill their requests. But if they disbelieved in Islam after that they would be completely destroyed just like the previous nations who rejected the miracle they requested were completely destroyed. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, chose to give them respite and ignore their foolish requests as he knew that they would still disbelieve after. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 59 of the Holy Quran:

"And nothing has prevented Us from sending signs [i.e., miracles] except that the former peoples denied them. And We gave Thamūd the she-camel as a visible sign, but they wronged her. And We send not the signs except as a warning."

This has been discussed in Imam Al Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 17:59, Page 104.

On one occasion the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, showed them a miracle, other than the Holy Quran, in order to confirm his declaration. He showed them the splitting of the Moon. Even after this obvious sign they simply claimed he tricked their eyes. During this time chapter 54 Al Qamar, verses 1-3, were revealed:

“The Hour has come near, and the moon has split [in two]. And if they see a sign [i.e., miracle], they turn away and say, "Passing magic." And they denied and followed their inclinations. But for every matter is a [time of] settlement.”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Pages 77-78 and a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3637, also discusses this event.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 118:

“Those who do not know say, "Why does Allāh not speak to us or there come to us a sign?" Thus spoke those before them like their words. Their hearts resemble each other…”

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights an important concept to understand. When a person makes up their mind beforehand that they will not accept a particular idea or concept then they always come up with poor excuses in order to justify rejecting the idea or concept. This has always been the attitude of those who approach situations after already making up their minds. A muslim must avoid this misguided attitude and instead strive to approach every worldly and religious situation with an open mind without pre

determining their decision. Behaving in this manner will allow them to make the right choice, a choice based on clear evidence, logic and common sense instead of their desires.

In addition, the misguided leaders of a society, who fear losing their position and influence with the coming of new ideas and concepts, have always strived hard to put off others from accepting the truthfulness of new ideas and concepts by coming up with silly questions. The leaders of the non-muslims of Mecca behaved in the same manner. They feared Islam would take away their prestige and social influence and force them to control their desires and as a result they came up with silly reasons why the general masses should reject Islam. A muslim must avoid misguiding others in this manner as they will earn the same sins as their followers. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674. In addition, a muslim must avoid blindly following the suggestions and opinions of others. Instead, they must assess each new concept or idea with common sense, logic and evidence in order to determine if it should be accepted and acted upon. This applies to both worldly and religious matters.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 118:

“…Thus spoke those before them like their words. Their hearts resemble each other…”

This verse also warns people from failing to learn from the attitude and actions of those who came before them, and even those who live in their time period. One can easily learn the correct path in life by observing the attitude and choices of others and the consequences they faced as a result of their choices. For example, it does not take a genius to learn that peace of mind does not lie with worldly things, such as wealth and fame, as those who possess these things face constant mental issues, such as anxiety, stress, depression, substance addiction and suicidal tendencies. Therefore, one must use their vision and learn vital lessons from the choices and actions of others so that they recognize and follow the correct path in both worldly and religious matters.

Allah, the Exalted, then explains that those who approach the teachings of Islam will a clear and unbiased mind will recognize its truthfulness without the need of witnessing miracles as the timeless miracle: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are enough evidence. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 118:

"…We have shown clearly the signs to a people who are certain [in faith]."

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent forty years living amongst the non-muslims of Mecca before he announced Prophethood so they full well knew he was no liar or madman. In fact, they would openly call him the truthful one and the trustworthy one. As they were the masters of the Arabic language, they full well knew the Holy Quran was not the words of a created being otherwise they would have fulfilled the challenge of Allah, the Exalted, to produce a single statement that matched

the Holy Quran in elegance, usefulness, its ability to be easily practiced on by anyone, irrespective of their knowledge, social status, gender, ethnicity and the time they live in and its ability to solve every personal, social, family and political issues society could ever face. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 38:

“Or do they say, "He [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] invented it?" Say, "Then bring forth a sūrah like it and call upon [for assistance] whomever you can besides Allāh, if you should be truthful."”

The fact they could not, nor can anyone else, is enough to prove the divine origin of the Holy Quran. This has been indicated in the next verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 119:

“Indeed, We have sent you with the truth as a bringer of good tidings and a warner…”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 118:

“…We have shown clearly the signs to a people who are certain [in faith].”

One can also accept the truthfulness of Islam by simply reflecting on the signs within the creation of the Heavens and the Earth. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 119:

“…and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire.””

The one who reflects on the creation of the Heavens and the Earth with an open mind will undoubtedly conclude the existence of One God, Allah, the Exalted, and the coming of Judgement Day. If a single building cannot be created correctly without a builder how could the perfect systems within the Heavens and the Earth be created without a Creator? Such as the perfect distance of the Earth from the Sun, the perfect density of the oceans, which allow sea life to thrive within them while huge ships sail on top of them, the perfect composition of the Earth, which allows weak plants to grow out from it while huge buildings can be built on it and the perfect system of the water cycle which provides the creation with pure and clean water. Something random can never lead to so many perfect systems. If they were multiple Gods, then each God would desire something different, which would lead to chaos for the creation. As this is not obviously the case, it clearly indicates that they can only be One God, Allah, the Exalted. The perfect systems found within the Heavens and the Earth, some of which were mentioned earlier, are all perfectly balanced so that the creation benefits from them. The major thing which has been left unbalanced thus far within the creation are the actions of people. The doer of good does not receive their full reward in this world nor does the doer of evil receive their full punishment. It is illogical to accept that the One who created countless balanced systems within the

universe will leave the actions of the people unbalanced. Therefore, a day must come when the actions of mankind will be balanced, namely, the Day of Judgement. In addition, the truth is that without Judgement Day, life in this world is meaningless as everything in it is imperfect and no matter what one obtains they will eventually be separated from it through the passing of time or through death. Existence in this world would therefore be pointless and meaningless without Judgement Day and the hereafter, as one would not have a higher, perfect and permanent goal to aspire for.

As indicated by the end of verse 118, the one who approaches the signs of Allah, the Exalted, with an open mind will obtain certainty of faith. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 118:

"…We have shown clearly the signs to a people who are certain [in faith]."

Certainty of faith will ensure one remains firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through every situation. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Whereas, the one who fails to appreciate the signs of Allah, the Exalted, will easily disobey Him, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, whenever their desires are contradicted by Islamic teachings.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 119:

“Indeed, We have sent you with the truth…”

The one who turns away from and ignores the truth, meaning, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will inevitably be left with falsehood. As falsehood is fickle and imperfect, one will never obtain peace of mind and success in this world or the next through it. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 32:

“For that is Allāh, your Lord, the Truth. And what can be beyond truth except error? So how are you averted?”

Therefore, if one desires peace of mind and success, then they must adhere to the truth, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In addition, one must adhere to these two sources of guidance and avoid all other sources of religious knowledge, even if they lead to good deeds. The more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, the less they will act on the truth sent down by Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan

Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 119:

“Indeed, We have sent you with the truth as a bringer of good tidings and a warner…”

It is important to note that a person will not benefit from warnings or good news until they act on them. Just like a driver will not benefit from hazard warnings on a road if they ignore them, neither will the muslim who ignores the warnings and good news discussed in Islamic teachings. One must therefore strive to learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they use the blessings they have been granted correctly. This will ensure they benefit from the warnings and good news given by Islamic teachings in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, if they ignore these warnings and good news then they will misuse the blessings they have been granted. This will cause them to experience what they have been warned of and they will lose out on the things they have been given good news about. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 119:

"Indeed, We have sent you with the truth as a bringer of good tidings and a warner…"

This also indicates that Islam is a religion of balance. In this case, balance between fear of punishment and hope of reward in both worlds. It is important to adopt a balance between these two extremes, as fear drives one away from sins and hope drives one towards good deeds. Whereas, adopting one over the other will lead to misguidance. For example, the one who only possesses fear, may well give up striving to obey Allah, the Exalted, as they have lost all hope of salvation. And the one who only adopts hope, may well

adopt wishful thinking, which has no value in Islam. Meaning, they will persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, while believing they will be forgiven, as the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is infinite. Hope is always tied with the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves avoiding sins and striving to perform good deeds. This difference between hope and wishful thinking has been explained in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has fulfilled his duty to convey the teachings of Islam and to give humanity the perfect role model to emulate. He will therefore not be held responsible for those who chose to ignore the message he was sent with. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 119:

"…and you will not be asked about the companions of Hellfire."

Generally speaking, one must not behave as a controller over people by forcing right guidance on them in either religious or worldly matters. Instead, one must present the truth to others according to logic, common sense and evidence and try their best to act on it themself in order to lead others by example and then leave people to their own choice, whether they make the right or wrong choice.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 120

وَلَن تَرْضَىٰ عَنكَ ٱلْيَهُودُ وَلَا ٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى ٱللَّهِ هُوَ ٱلْهُدَىٰ وَلَئِنِ
ٱتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَآءَهُم بَعْدَ ٱلَّذِى جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ مِن وَلِىٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٢٠﴾

“And never will the Jews and the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance." If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper.”

In this verse, Allah, the Exalted, indicates a universal reality, which every person must understand. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 120:

“And never will the Jews and the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion…”

Whenever a person chooses a different lawful path from others, whether in worldly or religious matters, they will always be criticized by others, especially by their relatives, who should be the first to support them on their journey. In respect to this verse, the scholars from the people of the book should have been the first people to support the muslims as they were fully aware of the truthfulness of Islam, as the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

People criticise those who take a path other than theirs as it makes them feel that their own path is bad. But this, in most cases, is a misplaced feeling, as the person only chooses another path as they believe it would be a better option for them. This often occurs when a muslim decides to strive harder in learning and acting on the teachings of Islam. If their relatives do not share their attitude, they will criticise them for not remaining on their path. This was one of the reasons why every Holy Prophet, peace be upon them, was criticised by their society, as they introduced a new and superior path to people. In cases like this, a muslim must remain firm on their choice, as long as it is a lawful one, and not be hindered by the unconstructive criticism of others. This is even more important to do in matters of faith. One must never be deterred from learning and acting on Islamic teachings by the unconstructive criticism of others, as this is the only way they can obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

This fact has been indicated in the main verse under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 120:

“And never will the Jews and the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allāh is the [only] guidance."…”

Generally speaking, one must understand that their purpose in life is not to please other people. Their purpose is to please their Creator and Lord, Allah, the Exalted. If they strive hard to please people, they will never achieve it as people are extremely difficult to please due to their fickle nature and as a result they will fail to please Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to trouble in both worlds. Whereas, the one who strives to fulfil their purpose of pleasing Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will be granted peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if people are not pleased with them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 120:

“And never will the Jews and the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allāh is the [only] guidance."…”

The guidance of Allah, the Exalted, is the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is important to note that guidance will only benefit someone when they act on it. Simply possessing knowledge of a path will not cause one to reach their destination. They must act on the knowledge in order to be guided to their destination. Similarly, one must learn and act on Islamic teachings in order to achieve right guidance. Simply possessing Islamic knowledge without

actions does not lead to right guidance nor does reciting the Holy Quran without understanding. In addition, this verse makes it clear that right guidance is only achieved through the two sources of guidance. Therefore, one must avoid all other sources of religious knowledge, even if it leads to good deeds, as the more one acts on other sources, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 120:

“…Say, "Indeed, the guidance of Allāh is the [only] guidance."…”

This also indicates that right guidance through every situation, whether times of difficulties or ease, is not possible to obtain without learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Forgetting this reality is one of the main reasons why many muslims, who fulfil the basic obligatory duties, still fail to achieve right guidance in their affairs. As a result, they do not successfully overcome the challenges of life, which in turn leads to a loss of peace of mind.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that every path other than the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is based only on the desires of people. This is quite evident when one reflects on how the people who claim faith in a particular religion live a life based on their own desires while clothing themselves in the garb of righteousness through a few mundane religious rituals which have no impact on how they use the blessings they have been granted throughout their day to day activities. Even those who do not follow a particular religion, only follow those things which cater to their desires, such as social media, fashion and culture. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 120:

“And never will the Jews and the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion…If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allāh no protector or helper.”

Therefore, existence in this world consists of two paths. The path of peace of mind and success in both worlds, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As Allah, the Exalted, alone controls all things, including the abode of peace of mind, the spiritual heart, He alone decides who obtains it. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

All other paths in life consists of only following one's desires or the desires of others. This will cause one to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn leads to trouble and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 120:

"…If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allāh no protector or helper."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 121

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَٰهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ يَتْلُونَهُۥ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِۦٓ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِۦ ۗ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِهِۦ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْخَٰسِرُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

"Those to whom We have given the Book recite it with its true recital. They [are the ones who] believe in it. And whoever disbelieves in it - it is they who are the losers."

As the people of the book were mentioned in the previous verses and are mentioned in the latter verses, this verse could be referring to them also. In that case, Allah, the Exalted, as per usual, makes it clear that not all members of the people of the book, who He criticized, behaved in the same manner. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 121:

"Those to whom We have given the Book recite it with its true recital…"

This indicates the importance of avoiding criticizing an entire group based on the actions of some members of that group. Behaving in this manner easily leads to discrimination, such as racism. Instead, each person must be judged based on their own actions. An entire organization or group can only be criticized if there is clear evidence they all behave in the same manner.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 121:

"Those to whom We have given the Book recite it with its true recital. They [are the ones who] believe in it…"

Whether this verse refers to some members of the people of the book and the Torah or the muslims and the Holy Quran, either way reciting a divine book correctly goes far beyond merely reading it. The Arabic word for

recitation actually means to follow, meaning, to follow practically. Truly reciting the divine scriptures therefore means understanding and acting on its teachings. The issue with merely reading the Holy Quran without understanding or action only leads to one contradicting what they are reciting through their actions. This cannot be defined as believing in the Holy Quran at all. This verse also means they apply the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly into their lives. Meaning, they avoid intentionally misinterpreting it in order to justify fulfilling their worldly desires. Sadly, a form of this can even occur amongst scholars whose blind loyalty to their school of thought and teachers encourages them to interpret the Holy Quran in order to fit their school of thought instead of interpreting it with an unbiased and open mind. It is important for a muslim to show respect to their teachers and peers but their loyalty must only be to Allah, the Exalted, and His Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they interpret the Holy Quran correctly in an unbiased manner, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did.

Those who avoid understanding and acting on the Holy Quran or those who intentionally misinterpret it therefore do not believe in it correctly. It is as if they believe in the Holy Quran through their tongues but not through their actions. As a result, they will contradict the teachings of the Holy Quran when they misuse the blessings they have been granted. This only leads to trouble and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 121:

"…And whoever disbelieves in it - it is they who are the losers."

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

A muslim must therefore accept and act on the Holy Quran according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if its teachings contradict their desires. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

They must accept and act on it just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 122-123

يَٰبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ ٱذۡكُرُواْ نِعۡمَتِيَ ٱلَّتِيٓ أَنۡعَمۡتُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلۡتُكُمۡ عَلَى ٱلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ١٢٢

وَٱتَّقُواْ يَوۡمٗا لَّا تَجۡزِي نَفۡسٌ عَن نَّفۡسٖ شَيۡـٔٗا وَلَا يُقۡبَلُ مِنۡهَا عَدۡلٞ وَلَا تَنفَعُهَا شَفَٰعَةٞ وَلَا هُمۡ يُنصَرُونَ



"O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds.

And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, and no compensation will be accepted from it, nor will any intercession benefit it, nor will they be aided."

Allah, the Exalted, then invites the people of the book to accepting Islam by reminding them of the countless favours He bestowed on them, such as the Torah and Bible and the many Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, who were sent to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 122:

"O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds."

Instead of showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, which in this case would have been to accept Islam as they clearly recognized its truthfulness as the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were both discussed in their divine scriptures, the majority of them still rejected Islam. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

They knew Islam would encourage them to use the blessings they had been granted correctly and as this contradicted their desires, the majority of the people of the book rejected Islam despite recognizing its truthfulness. They also could not accept following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, who was not from their lineage, the children of Israel. As they claimed their superiority over mankind was based solely on their lineage, accepting and following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would clearly contradict their false belief. This they could not live with.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 122:

"O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds."

Generally speaking, a muslim must avoid following in the footsteps of the people of the book by failing to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Gratitude involves adopting a good intention in all of one's actions so that they only act to please Allah, the Exalted. A sign of this is that they do not expect nor hope for any payback or reward from people. Gratitude with the tongue involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. Gratitude with one's actions involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 122:

"O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and that I preferred you over the worlds."

In addition, Allah, the Exalted, favored the children of Israel over the rest of mankind by appointing them as His representatives on Earth. They were meant to implement their divine teachings into their lives and behave as the perfect role model for the rest of mankind. But as they failed to do this, their role was taken from them and transferred to the muslims. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh…"

But as indicated by this verse, muslims will only fulfil their duty as the representatives of Allah, the Exalted, when they learn and act on Islamic teachings thereby using the blessings they have been granted correctly. This will ensure they behave as perfect role models for the rest of humanity to emulate. As indicated by the next verse, no muslim will escape from facing

the consequences of failing this duty on Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 123:

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all…”

Just like a king would dismiss their ambassador for failing to represent their kingdom correctly, each muslim will face the consequences if they fail to fulfil their duty as the representative of Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, then warned the people of the book, and by extension the muslims, that their false beliefs in respect to Judgement Day will not save them from punishment if they failed to accept and act on the teachings of Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 123:

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, and no compensation will be accepted from it, nor will any intercession benefit it, nor will they be aided.”

In reality, the person who fails to act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, thereby misusing the blessings they have been granted, will face punishment in this world, if they fail to repent. The very blessings they have been granted, such

as their wealth and family, will become a source of stress, anxiety and depression for them. As a result, this person will go from one mental issue to the next even if they have the world at their feet. They may experience moments of entertainment and fun but they will not last long and overall they will lead a life full of stress. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

But as this worldly punishment is often subtle, people fail to recognise their disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, as the source of their troubles. Whereas, the cause of their punishment on the Day of Judgement will be made crystal clear to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 123:

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, and no compensation will be accepted from it, nor will any intercession benefit it, nor will they be aided.”

The people of the book, as well as many muslims today, have adopted a distorted belief regarding Judgement Day. They believe as they are the favorites of Allah, the Exalted, they will somehow escape punishment for their persistent disobedience. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 18:

“But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of Allāh and His beloved." Say, "Then why does He punish you for your sins?" Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created. He forgives whom He wills, and He punishes whom He wills….”

Believing such a thing is highly disrespectful towards Allah, the Exalted, as it would suggest that He will not treat people equally on Judgement Day. This silly belief contradicts the justice and fairness of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 21:

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.”

Their distorted beliefs of Judgement Day includes believing that they will somehow blame someone else for their misguidance in order to escape punishment. But Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that not even blaming the Devil will be accepted, as each person is responsible for their own choices and actions and will therefore face the consequences of them. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 22:

“And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, "Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 123:

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all…”

Another distorted belief of Judgement Day is when one believes they will somehow make up for their disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. For example, many claim they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. But this is something which will never be

accepted by Allah, the Exalted, as making peace with Him must be done in this world through His sincere obedience. Chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 57:

"So that Day, their excuse will not benefit those who wronged, nor will they be asked to appease [Allāh]."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 123:

"And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, and no compensation will be accepted from it…"

Another distorted belief of Judgement Day is that when one believes someone else will rescue them through intercession. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and has been discussed in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less, even with his intercession some muslims will still go to Hell and a moment in Hell is truly unbearable. In addition, the one who persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and expects intercession on Judgement Day should fear that they may lose their faith before they depart from this world. In this case, no intercession will be accepted on their behalf. Faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience. Just like a plant will die if it fails to receive nourishment, such as water, so may well the faith of a person if they fail to nourish it with acts of obedience. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 123:

"…nor will any intercession benefit it, nor will they be aided."

One of the major reasons why the horrors of Judgement Day and Hell are depicted in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is to remove the distorted beliefs people have adopted in respect to them. When one possesses distorted beliefs in respect to Judgement Day it will only encourage them to adopt wishful thinking which is always tied to persisting on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Whereas, understanding the real nature of Judgement Day will encourage one to sincerely repent and persist on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. And the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 123:

"And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, and no compensation will be accepted from it, nor will any intercession benefit it, nor will they be aided."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 124

۞ وَإِذِ ٱبْتَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِۦمَ رَبُّهُۥ بِكَلِمَٰتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّى جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا ۖ قَالَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِى ۖ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

“And when Abraham was tried by his Lord with words [commands] and he fulfilled them. [Allah] said, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people." [Abraham] said, "And of my descendants?" [Allah] said, "My covenant does not include the wrongdoers."”

The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, is often mentioned in the Holy Quran as he is the ancestor of both the idol worshippers of Mecca and the people of the book, who were mainly living in Medina. Allah, the Exalted, repeatedly highlights how the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, adhered strictly to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in divine teachings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

"*And when Abraham was tried by his Lord with words [commands] and he fulfilled them…"*

This is a direct criticism of the idol worshippers of Mecca and the people of the book who were extremely proud of the fact they were the descendants of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, despite the fact they did not behave like him and instead persisted on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. In fact, both groups even claimed to be upholding the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, even though they were both clearly disrespecting it. Their disobedience reached its highest point when they rejected Islam despite recognizing its truthfulness. The idol worshippers of Mecca spent 40 years with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, before he announced Prophethood and therefore knew he was no liar. And as they were masters of the Arabic language they knew the Holy Quran were not the words of a created being. The scholars from the people of the book recognized the Holy Quran as they were familiar with its author, Allah, the Exalted, and they recognized the truthfulness of Islam as the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

Muslims must avoid following the footsteps of these two groups by claiming pride in being the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while failing to practically follow him and his constant and sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is how one follows in the footsteps of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and passes the test of this world.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

"*And when Abraham was tried by his Lord with words [commands] and he fulfilled them…"*

In addition, this verse also reminds muslims that as this world is the place of test and trials, no person escapes facing tests, not even Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. Remembering this fact will aid one to remain patient during times of tests. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one's speech and actions and remaining firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. One can remain patient when they understand, through knowledge and certainty, that whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best for them, even if they do not recognize the wisdoms behind His choices. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

When a person adds certainty of faith to their patience, they will be granted spiritual leadership, just like the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was granted it. Chapter 32 As Sajdah, verse 24:

"And We made from among them leaders guiding by Our command when they were patient and [when] they were certain of Our signs."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

“And when Abraham was tried by his Lord with words [i.e., commands] and he fulfilled them. [Allāh] said, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people."…”

Certainty of faith is achieved when one learns and acts on divine knowledge. This causes one to believe in Allah, the Exalted, based on clear evidence instead of through blindly following others. The more certainty of faith one possesses, the more they will adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through both times of ease and difficulties. This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in divine teachings.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions the great sincerity the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, possessed for his descendants, as he desired them to be rightly guided and guide others on the right path by becoming the representatives of Allah, the Exalted, on Earth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

“*And when Abraham was tried by his Lord with words [commands] and he fulfilled them. [Allah] said, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people." [Abraham] said, "And of my descendants?"…”*

A muslim must therefore possess this type of sincerity for others and prove it through actions by firstly learning and acting on Islamic teachings so that they fulfil their role as the representative of Allah, the Exalted, on Earth and become a role model for future generations, just like the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, did, and then teach the next generation the importance of learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they too fulfil their role as the representatives of Allah, the Exalted, on Earth. Only through this method will one fulfil their duty to Allah, the Exalted, and towards others, such as the younger generation. The one who fulfils their duty in this way will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to fulfil their duty towards Allah, the Exalted, and others and instead persists on disobeying Him, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, will not obtain peace of mind and success. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

“…*[Allah] said, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people." [Abraham] said, "And of my descendants?" [Allāh] said, "My covenant does not include the wrongdoers."*”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

“…*[Allah] said, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people." [Abraham] said, "And of my descendants?" [Allāh] said, "My covenant does not include the wrongdoers."*”

Allah, the Exalted, also warned the idol worshippers of Mecca and the people of the book that being related to the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was not enough to obtain success in both worlds, as both groups

claimed that as they were his descendants they would be granted success in both worlds irrespective of their deeds. Allah, the Exalted, made it clear that lineage will not benefit anyone until they practically obey Allah, the Exalted, just like their righteous ancestor had done. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has made it clear that the lineage of a person will not raise their rank in the hereafter if they lack good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2945. In addition, believing that someone's lineage gives them immunity from punishment is a highly disrespectful towards Allah, the Exalted, as it challenges His justice and fairness.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 125

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا ٱلْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَٱتَّخِذُوا۟ مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ مُصَلًّى ۖ وَعَهِدْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ
وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا بَيْتِىَ لِلطَّآئِفِينَ وَٱلْعَـٰكِفِينَ وَٱلرُّكَّعِ ٱلسُّجُودِ ﴿١٢٥﴾

“And [mention] when We made the House [the Kaaba] a place of return for the people and [a place of] security. And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer. And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform circumambulation and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer]."”

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds the non-muslims of Mecca that they were blessed with nobility, status, provision and security within the Arabian Peninsula because of His House, the Kaaba. This favour alone was enough of a reason for them to accept Islam. The truth of which they clearly recognized, as they spent 40 years with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prior to his announcement of Prophethood and therefore knew he was no liar and the fact they were masters of the Arabic language and therefore knew the Holy Quran were not the words of a created being. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 125:

"*And [mention] when We made the House [the Kaaba] a place of return for the people and [a place of] security…"*

A place of return indicates the Holy Pilgrimage which continued to be practiced from the time of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, even though its correct practices were altered by misguided people. In addition, just like muslims face the Kaaba during their prayers, they must also return their judgements and decisions in every situation back to the Owner of the Kaaba, Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, they must face every situation and use every blessing according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A place of return also indicates the importance of unity within the muslim nation. No matter what differences there are within the muslim nation, such as nationality, language and ethnicity, their intention and efforts must be directed at a common goal, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which is represented by His House, the Kaaba, and it being the prayer direction for all muslims. A place of return also indicates that no matter how much a muslim becomes distracted by worldly preoccupations they must constantly turn their focus towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted,

throughout the day, just like they turn their bodies towards the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, during the prayers. A place of return also reminds muslims that their final return will be to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day, just like they stand in front of Him whenever they offer their prayers in the direction of His House, the Kaaba. The one who constantly bears this in mind will practically prepare for their final return to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 125:

"*And [mention] when We made the House [the Kaaba] a place of return for the people and [a place of] security…"*

Through the supplication of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, Allah, the Exalted, made Mecca a place of security for its people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 126:

"And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a secure city…""

Due to the presence of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, within Mecca, the city and its habitants gained security from the violence which regularly occurred outside it amongst the various tribes. The inhabitants were so secure that their trade caravans which journeyed from Mecca would not be attacked and looted by thieves out of respect of the fact they were considered the custodians of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 67:

"Have they not seen that We made [Makkah] a safe sanctuary, while people are being taken away all around them? Then in falsehood do they believe, and in the favor of Allāh they disbelieve?"

As mentioned earlier, this was enough of a reason to accept Islam and sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. But as doing so would have directly challenged their worldly desires and would have led to a loss of their social and political influence within the Arabian Peninsula, the majority of the leaders of the non-muslims of Mecca violently opposed Islam.

As the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, demonstrated complete sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, throughout his life and particularly when he built the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, Allah, the Exalted, kept the memory of His efforts alive till the Day of Judgement. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 125:

“…And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer…”

The stone the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, stood upon to build the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, is a place of prayer for all muslims till the end of time. Generally speaking, this reminds muslims that their good intentions and sincere efforts in those things which please Allah, the Exalted, will not only benefit them in both worlds but their efforts will be kept alive, in some form or fashion. Whereas, one’s efforts towards those things which are connected to the material world will pass away with time and their death. This is an inevitable fate no one denies. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 96:

“Whatever you have will end, but what Allāh has is lasting. And We will surely give those who were patient their reward according to the best of what they used to do.”

Therefore, one must remain patient on the things which please Allah, the Exalted, even if this contradicts their desires or the opinions of people, society and social media, as the benefits of this alone endures in both worlds. A muslim must strive to fulfil this verse by using every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure the blessings of their sincere actions endure in both worlds and the positive effects remain in this world for others to benefit from, just like the sincere efforts of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, have remained on Earth, thousands of years after his passing.

Allah, the Exalted, then explains the importance of not only building Mosques but also the importance of fulfilling their purpose, which is to allow muslims to sincerely worship Allah, the Exalted, within them and for the spreading of Islamic knowledge. This purpose was being hindered by the non-muslims of Mecca despite the fact they claimed to be the custodians of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, and the flag bearers of the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 125:

"…And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who circumambulate it and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in acts of obedience]."

Muslims must therefore avoid following in the footsteps of the leaders of the non-muslims of Mecca by failing to fulfill the purpose of the Mosques of Allah, the Exalted. All muslims must ensure that the Mosques are kept clean physically and spiritually. Only the obedience and worship of Allah, the Exalted, must occur within them. They must not be used as social clubs for leisurely conversations. They must be used as safe and secure places for the education of the next generation so that they can be raised to become model muslims. Accurate Islamic knowledge derived directly from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, must be taught within them and all other sources of religious knowledge should be avoided, even if they lead to good deeds. The simple fact is that the more one acts on religious knowledge taken from other sources, the less they will act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 126

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ رَبِّ ٱجْعَلْ هَٰذَا بَلَدًا ءَامِنًا وَٱرْزُقْ أَهْلَهُۥ مِنَ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُم بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْـَٔاخِرِ
قَالَ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُۥ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُۥٓ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ ٱلنَّارِ وَبِئْسَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ١٢٦

“And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allah and the Last Day." [Allah] said, "And whoever disbelieves - I will grant him enjoyment for a little; then I will force him to the punishment of the Fire, and wretched is the destination."”

Allah, the Exalted, reminded the non-muslims of Mecca that they only gained security, provision and honour within the Arabian Peninsula because of the supplication of their ancestor, the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and not because they themselves were rightly guided. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 126:

“And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits…””

At the time, the tribes around Mecca would constantly attack each other and loot the trading caravans that passed near their land but out of respect for the House of Allah, the Exalted, which was the manifestation of the supplication of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, they would not harm the non-muslims of Mecca at all. Chapter 106 Quraysh, verses 1-4:

“For the accustomed security of the Quraysh. Their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer. Let them worship the Lord of this House. Who has fed them, [saving them] from hunger and made them safe, [saving them] from fear.”

This point alone was enough of a reason for the non-muslims of Mecca to accept Islam especially when they clearly recognized its truthfulness. They spent 40 years with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prior to his announcement of Prophethood and therefore knew he

was no liar and as they were masters of the Arabic language, they knew the Holy Quran were not the words of a created being. Despite all this, the leaders of the non-muslims of Mecca rejected Islam as they knew it would encourage them to use the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of in ways pleasing to themselves. This is something they could not accept.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates the misguided attitude of the non-muslims of Mecca who claimed they were the flag bearers of the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, even though he supplicated against their attitude and way of life. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 126:

“And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allāh and the Last Day."…”

He supplicated in this manner out of sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, as he feared that the one who did not believe in the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, or Judgement Day would only misguide others and spread corruption on Earth. This is a clear fact which is undeniable. The one who does not believe in Allah, the Exalted, at all or does not support their verbal claim of faith with actions and the one who does not believe in Judgement Day or fails to practically prepare for it, will inevitably misuse the blessings they have been granted. This attitude will cause others to become misguided, such as the people who blindly imitate celebrities. The one who misuses the blessings they have been granted, such as their physical or political strength, will inevitable wrong others. And the one who does not believe or fear their

accountability on Judgement Day will easily wrong others, especially when they believe no one will hold them accountable, such as the Police. Whereas, the one who practically believes in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgement Day will strive to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they benefit themself and others, they will fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and the creation and it will ensure they refrain from harming others, as they fear the consequences of this, even if they believe they can escape worldly authorities, such as the Police. This rightly guided attitude will spread peace and justice within society. One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe this occurred within the Islamic empire when the people used the blessings they had been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This fear of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, has been indicated in the rest of the main verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 126:

“And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allāh and the Last Day." [Allāh] said, "And whoever disbelieves - I will grant him enjoyment for a little; then I will force him to the punishment of the Fire, and wretched is the destination."”

In addition, the supplication of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, also teaches muslims the importance of placing one’s sincerity and loyalty to Allah, the Exalted, above all others, as his supplication included his own descendants. This has been indicated in an earlier verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 124:

“…[Allāh] said, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people." [Abraham] said, "And of my descendants?" [Allāh] said, "My covenant does not include the wrongdoers."”

It is important to fulfil the rights of others, especially one’s relatives, according to the teachings of Islam but one’s loyalty must be to Allah, the Exalted, alone. Prioritising the loyalty of people will only cause one to disobey Allah, the Exalted, in order to please and support other people. This attitude will only lead to disunity, as being loyal to a particular person will inevitably upset another person. Whereas, if muslims prioritise loyalty to Allah, the Exalted, over all else, they will inevitably unite, as they share a common goal, which is the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Failing to act on this is one of the main reasons why the bonds between relatives and friends become severed over time.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 126:

“And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allāh and the Last Day." [Allāh] said, "And whoever disbelieves - I will grant him enjoyment for a little; then I will force him to the punishment of the Fire, and wretched is the destination."”

Allah, the Exalted, does not force right guidance on people, as this would defy the purpose of this world. This world is the abode of tests and everyone is therefore granted free will to choose whether they will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, or not. A person must therefore learn and act on the teachings of Islam so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if Islam contradicts their desires. They must accept and act on Islamic teachings just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor, knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

As indicated by the main verse, a person must never be fooled into believing they are rightly guided because of the worldly things they have been granted, as Allah, the Exalted, provides for all His creation, irrespective of their faith or actions. Right guidance is solely based on whether one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, or not. In addition, as indicated in the main verse, Allah, the Exalted, does not punish people for their disobedience immediately. He instead gives people countless opportunities to recognize, accept and act on the teachings of Islam so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. But it is important for a person not to be fooled by the countless opportunities they are granted by Allah, the Exalted, as these opportunities will eventually stop someday. If a person fails to make use of them, then they

will be left with no excuses which will save them from punishment in both worlds.

No matter what path a person chooses, they will undoubtedly face the consequences of their choice in both worlds. In this world, the consequences are often subtle whereby the very worldly things one has been granted become a source of stress, difficulties and misery for them, such as their wealth, family and career. Whereas, the consequences in the hereafter will be made very clear to them. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

One must always remember that even if they have moments of fun and entertainment, they will not escape their fate of misery in both worlds, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind. This is quite evident when observes those who misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as the celebrities of this world. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 126:

“…*Abraham said, "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allah and the Last Day." [Allah] said, "And whoever disbelieves - I will grant him enjoyment for a little; then I will force him to the punishment of the Fire, and wretched is the destination."*”

Generally speaking, muslims must avoid following the footsteps of the non-muslims of Mecca who claimed to be the flag bearers of the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, even though their actions opposed his way. A muslim must fear that if they fail to practically believe in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgement Day by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is the way of Islam, they may well share the fate of those mentioned in this verse. This is because faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience. Just like a plant dies when it fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, so may well the faith of a person die if they fail to nourish it with acts of obedience.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 127-129

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ ٱلْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ ٱلْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّآ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ



رَبَّنَا وَٱجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِنَآ أُمَّةً مُّسْلِمَةً لَّكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَآ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ



رَبَّنَا وَٱبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا۟ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَـٰتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ ٱلْكِتَـٰبَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ



“And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing.

Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You. And show us our rites [of worship] and turn to us [with mercy]. Indeed, You are the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.

Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise."”

Allah, the Exalted, reminded the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book of the pious and sincere intention of their ancestors, the Holy Prophet Ibrahim and his son, the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon them, when they were building the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, in Mecca. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

"*And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us…"*"

Their only intention in building the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, was so that it becomes a symbol for the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Narrating this incident was a direct criticism of the non-muslims of Mecca, who claimed to be the flag bearers of the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, even though they completely contradicted his teachings and way. They abandoned the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and instead committed polytheism with Him so that they could create a life style for themselves which suited their desires. Muslims must avoid following the footsteps of the non-muslims of Mecca and instead carry the legacy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, correctly by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Verbally claiming to believe in the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while failing to practical uphold his legacy will not benefit a muslim in either this world or the next, just like the non-muslims of Mecca did not gain any benefit for their verbal claims of being the

flag bearers of the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, even though they did not practically follow him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

"*And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us…""*

Generally speaking, this verse indicates the importance of supporting each other in things which please Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must not observe who is doing something and then decide whether to support them or not. Instead, they must observe what someone is doing and if it is good, then they should aid them according to their means. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

This attitude will ensure one does not aid others out of blind loyalty in things which are bad. They will instead be encouraged to prioritize the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, over their loyalty to people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

“*And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us…*””

This verse also reminds muslims of the importance of concentrating their efforts on things which please Allah, the Exalted, instead of prioritizing those things which are connected to the world, such as a property empire. The truth is that a person will only take their good deeds with them to their grave and all other things, such as a property empire, will be left behind for other people to enjoy, while the deceased will be held accountable for acquiring it. A muslim must therefore send ahead good deeds by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and leave behind a spiritual legacy which will benefit them even after they have died, meaning an ongoing charity, such as building a Mosque. The one who is surrounded by goodness in this way will be granted peace of mind and success in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

“*And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us…*””

This verse also indicates the importance of possessing a good intention. The one who does things in order to please anyone other than Allah, the Exalted, or aims to please others with Allah, the Exalted, will not obtain any reward from Allah, the Exalted, as He only rewards those who do things solely for His pleasure. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A positive sign of a good intention is when one does not desire nor expect for any payback or gratitude from people. A muslim must always remember that Allah, the Exalted, knows the hidden intention of people and knows and hears their words and actions. Therefore, they must ensure their intention is always correct and follow it up with good speech, whereby they speak what is good or remain silent, and follow their intention up with good actions. Meaning, they must use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 127:

“And [mention] when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ishmael, [saying], "Our Lord, accept [this] from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing.””

If one fails to possess a good intention and fails to follow them up with good speech and actions then they will gain nothing good from their efforts in either this world or the next. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

“Say, "Shall we inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work."”

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights the eagerness of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim and his son, the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon them, of completely submitting to Allah, the Exalted, at all times. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

“Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You…”

This submission involves one accepting faith in Allah, the Exalted, through their spiritual heart and supporting it through their speech and actions. Meaning, they must strive to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, through their speech and actions, as faith in the spiritual heart has little value without outward actions. This outward manifestation involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This makes it clear that there is no such thing as being a muslim who does not practice Islam, as the very word muslim means to practically submit to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, this indicates that one must prioritize the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, over all else, such as obeying their desires, the desires of others and following fashion, culture and social media. If one prioritizes these things over the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then they have submitted to them and not to Allah, the Exalted. One must therefore regularly assess their intention and actions in order to ensure they submit to none other than Allah, the Exalted, as claiming

submission to Allah, the Exalted, through one's tongue while failing to prove it through one's actions has no value in Islam.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

"Our Lord, and make us Muslims [in submission] to You…"

The Holy Prophets Ibrahim and Ismaeel, peace be upon them, had already submitted to Allah, the Exalted, when they made this supplication. This therefore indicates the importance of remaining steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times. Merely declaring faith in Islam is therefore not enough to achieve success. One must constantly support their declaration of faith by adhering to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times, during all situations. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. It is important to note that being steadfast does not mean one must be perfect. It means one must strive to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and whenever they happen to sin, they must strive to correct their behaviour in order to avoid repeating the sin again in the future. This has been indicated in many Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1987. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 6:

"…so take a straight course to Him and seek His forgiveness…"

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights the importance of guiding one's descendants towards His obedience, also. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

"…and from our descendants a Muslim nation [in submission] to You…"

This is only achieved when one follows in the footsteps of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, who taught their children, through their speech and actions, the importance of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times. Meaning, they became role models for their children by learning and acting on divine teachings themselves and then educated their children on the value and importance of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 132-133:

"And Abraham instructed his sons [to do the same] and [so did] Jacob, [saying], "O my sons, indeed Allāh has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims." Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac - one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.""

Sadly, many muslims are extremely eager to have children yet they fail to teach them the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by leading by example and

by teaching them the knowledge of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

As indicated by the next part of verse 128, leading by example and teaching the next the generation the importance of obeying Allah, the Exalted, is not possible without knowledge. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

“…And show us our rites [of worship]…”

This therefore indicates the importance of gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge as one cannot obey Allah, the Exalted, nor teach others how to obey Him without gaining Islamic knowledge taken from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

This is why gaining Islamic knowledge is a duty on every muslim. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 224. Ignorance only leads one to adopting a bad intention, bad speech and bad actions and must therefore be avoided at all costs.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

“…And show us our rites [of living]…”

This verse could also be referring to the code of conduct one must adhere to in order to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. This indicates the importance of adhering strictly to divine teachings, which in this age are the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoiding all other sources of religious knowledge, even if they lead to good deeds. The fact is that the more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, created humans, He alone knows the best code of conduct which suits them and what leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. One must therefore adhere to this code of conduct, even if it contradicts their desires as it is best for them. They must accept and act on the Islamic code of conduct just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

The next part of verse 128, indicates that one can only sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, through His mercy, as the knowledge, inspiration, ability, opportunity and the acceptance of good deeds all come from Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

"…and turn to us [in mercy]…"

The Arabic word used for turn to us can also mean accept our repentance. Both interpretations highlights the importance of adopting humility. A humble person will know they cannot obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds without the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and the humble person will always acknowledge their flaws and errors and beg Allah, the Exalted, to overlook and pardon them. This humility is indicated in the final part of verse 128. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 128:

"…Indeed, You are the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful."

A muslim must therefore take advantage of the fact that Allah, the Exalted, constantly turns to people with mercy and forgiveness before their death. One must avoid adopting wishful thinking in respect to the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, by persisting on His disobedience while assuming He will forgive them. Instead, one must adopt real hope in His mercy by striving to sincerely obey Him, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and then believe He will turn to them with mercy and forgiveness. This difference between wishful thinking and real hope has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear to both the people of the book and the non-muslims of Mecca, both of whom claimed to be the flag bearers of the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, that the true flag bearer of his legacy was the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and by extension, those who follow him. This fact was made clear by the Holy Prophets Ibrahim and Ismaeel, peace be upon them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 129:

"Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves…"

The first thing to note is that their supplication was fulfilled thousands of years later. This indicates the importance of avoiding behaving hastily with Allah, the Exalted, in respect to obtaining one's lawful worldly desires. Allah, the Exalted, is the Most Generous and only holds back responding immediately thereby working according to His own timetable as this is best for everyone involved. This has been indicated in many Islamic teachings. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 89:

“*[Allah] said, "Your supplication has been answered. So remain on a right course and follow not the way of those who do not know.""*

A muslim must therefore persist on good and lawful supplications knowing Allah, the Exalted, will respond at the best time, in the best way and may well respond in a way which is not obvious to them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 129:

“Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves…”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, being from the Arabs further supported his claim to Prophethood, as he was no stranger to the non-muslims of Mecca. In fact, he spent 40 years of his life prior to announcing Prophethood amongst them and they therefore recognized his sincerity and truthfulness. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

“…for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"

As the people of the book introduced the importance of lineage into their faith, the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was a direct descendant of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, just like they were, should have encouraged them to accept and follow him, especially when they recognised him and the Holy Quran, as they were both discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

Despite the fact that both the leaders of the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book recognised the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they still failed to believe in him. Muslims who have accepted the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, must support their verbal claim through actions by following in his footsteps, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, as a verbal claim to faith without actions have little value in Islam as it does not

lead to the purification of one's intention, speech or actions. This has been indicated in the next part of verse 129. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 129:

"Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them…"

The book refers to the law and code of conduct discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which mankind must follow in order to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. As knowledge can be misused by people, wisdom is required in order to ensure one uses their knowledge correctly so that they benefit themself and others in both worlds. When one combines Islamic knowledge with wisdom, then it will lead to the purification of their intention, speech and actions so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 129:

"Our Lord, and send among them a messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them…"

This verse also makes it clear that blind recitation of the Holy Quran is not enough to achieve success if one fails to understand and act on it. Only through acting on Islamic knowledge will one purify their intention, speech

and actions. This in turn, leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if a muslim follows the footsteps of the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book, who rejected Islam as it contradicted their desires, by claiming they are the flag bearers of the legacy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while failing to practically follow in his footsteps, by learning and acting on Islamic teachings, then it cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This in turn leads to stress, difficulties and trouble in both worlds, even if one possesses faith in Islam. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whichever path a person chooses, they will undoubtedly face the consequences of their choice in both worlds, as they cannot escape the might and power of Allah, the Exalted, nor will they be wronged in anyway by Him, as He always acts with wisdom. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 129:

“…Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise."”

As Allah, the Exalted, is All Wise, He alone knows who deserves to be granted Prophethood. This is also a direct criticism of the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book, who, out of jealousy, questioned why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was chosen to be the final Holy Prophet, peace be upon them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verses 31-32:

“And they said, "Why was this Qur’ān not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities?" Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord?...”

Generally speaking, envy is a major sin which must be avoided at all costs. It is a major sin as the envier directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. They behave as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake by granting a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. The one who allows their envy to strive verbally and physically against the one they envy will only destroy their own good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210. Lawful envy is when one wishes to obtain

a similar blessing to someone else without the latter losing what they have been granted. Even though this type is lawful, yet it is only praiseworthy in religious matters and blameworthy in worldly matters. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised two cases of lawful and praiseworthy envy in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 1896. One can envy the person who uses their knowledge correctly and teaches others it. The other person one can envy is the one who obtains lawful wealth and spends it in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

One must avoid envy by understanding that it is a major sin which challenges the distribution choice of Allah, the Exalted. They must understand that Allah, the Exalted, grants each person what is best for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Therefore, instead of envying others they must concentrate on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will lead to further blessings and peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, envying others will only cause one to forget obeying Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

The muslim who is envied must remain patient against the verbal and physical actions of their envier and only defend themselves within the bounds of Islam. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one's speech and actions and maintaining one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which

involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is how one seeks refuge with Allah, the Exalted, from their envier. Chapter 113 Al Falaq, verses 1 and 5:

“Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak…And from the evil of an envier when he envies.""

Allah, the Exalted, will then protect them from the negative effects of their envier, even if this is not obvious to them, as Allah, the Exalted, acts according to His infinite knowledge and wisdom and not according to the very limited thinking of people.

To conclude, a person must therefore, for their own sake, accept the clear evidence of the truthfulness of Islam, learn and act on its teachings, even if it contradicts their desires. They must accept and act on its teachings just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor knowing it is best for them despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. If they choose to ignore the advice of their medical doctor, it will only lead to poor mental and physical health. Similarly, the one who fails to learn and act on Islamic teachings will face difficulties, stress and trouble in both worlds.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 130-134

وَمَن يَرْغَبُ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُۥ ۚ وَلَقَدِ ٱصْطَفَيْنَـٰهُ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَإِنَّهُۥ فِى ٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ لَمِنَ ٱلصَّـٰلِحِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُۥ رَبُّهُۥٓ أَسْلِمْ ۖ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ ٱلْعَـٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَآ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَـٰبَنِىَّ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ٱصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمُ ٱلدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

أَمْ كُنتُمْ شُهَدَآءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ ٱلْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنۢ بَعْدِى قَالُوا۟ نَعْبُدُ إِلَـٰهَكَ وَإِلَـٰهَ ءَابَآئِكَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَـٰقَ إِلَـٰهًا وَٰحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۖ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ ۖ وَلَا تُسْـَٔلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

"And who would be averse to the religion of Abraham except one who makes a fool of himself. And We had chosen him in this world, and indeed he, in the Hereafter, will be among the righteous.

When his Lord said to him, "Submit," he said, "I have submitted [in Islam] to the Lord of the worlds."

And Abraham instructed his sons and [so did] Jacob, [saying], "O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims."

Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Eesaac - one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him."

That was a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do."

Allah, the Exalted, criticizes the attitude of the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book, who both claimed to be the flag bearers of the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, even though they both contradicted his way, thereby making fools out of themselves. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 130:

"*And who would be averse to the religion of Abraham except one who makes a fool of himself…"*

They contradicted his way as his way involved sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings he had been granted in ways pleasing to Him. The people of the book and the non-muslims of Mecca contradicted his way as it challenged their worldly desires, as they desired to use the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to themselves.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 130:

"*And who would be averse to the religion of Abraham except one who makes a fool of himself…"*

Generally speaking, a muslim can fool themself by adopting an attitude which contradicts the way of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, while

believing they will obtain success in both worlds. For example, one can persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, while believing someone else will save them on the Day of Judgement. Even though the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is a fact and is discussed in many Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4308, none the less some muslims will still go to Hell. As a moment in Hell is unbearable, one must avoid this attitude, as they are only mocking the intercession of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A muslim can fool themself by persisting on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, while believing they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Real hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as demonstrated by the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, involves persisting on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then hoping they will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted. Disobedience is always connected to wishful thinking and has no value in Islam. This difference between wishful thinking and hope in Allah, the Exalted, has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. Many fool themselves into believing peace of mind and success in this world lies in pursuing worldly desires. As Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind. He has made it clear that only the one who sincerely obeys Him, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in divine teachings, will obtain it. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who misuses the blessings they have been granted will obtain nothing except stress, misery and difficulties, even if they possess the whole world and have moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Others fool themselves by believing they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Allah, the Exalted, has made it clear that obeying Him will only benefit someone when it is done in this world. Chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 57:

“So that Day, their excuse will not benefit those who wronged, nor will they be asked to appease [Allāh].”

Some fool themselves into assuming Allah, the Exalted, will be pleased with them even though they ignore the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and instead act on other sources of religious knowledge. One must therefore avoid other sources of religious knowledge, even if it leads to good deeds as the more one acts on other sources of knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

One must therefore avoid all types of misguided attitudes and twisted beliefs which only causes them to fool themself. Instead, they must follow the way of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, by sincerely striving to obey Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that a person will only receive His special mercy, which leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds, when they adhere to the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and

follow his way, which is the legacy of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 130:

"…*And We had chosen him in this world, and indeed he, in the Hereafter, will be among the righteous."*

This statement is enough to make it clear that the only thing which gives a person superiority over others is their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other standards, such as gender, race, lineage and social status, has no bearing in the sight of Allah, the Exalted, when determining one's rank. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

This was another criticism at both the people of the book and the non-muslims of Mecca who believed their lineage was enough to guarantee them salvation.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 130:

"…*And We had chosen him in this world, and indeed he, in the Hereafter, will be among the righteous."*

Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that if one desires to join the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, in the hereafter, then they must follow his way, which is the way of righteousness. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. It also includes accompanying the righteous in this world, as this leads to adopting their positive characteristics, which in turn aids one in adopting righteousness. The one who adopts the actions of a group of people is considered from them. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031. But the one who adopts evil companions will undoubtedly adopt their characteristics and will therefore be considered from them. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

"Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous."

A muslim must not be fooled by the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, that a person will be in the hereafter with those they love. It is obvious that real love is expressed through actions not words,

which involves practically following the pious predecessors. Otherwise if a verbal declaration of love was enough it would mean that the other nations who believe in and claim love for their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, will end up with them in the hereafter. This is obviously not the case, as they failed to follow in the footsteps of their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, despite the fact they verbally claim to love them.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that He chose the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, due to his complete submission and obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 131:

"*When his Lord said to him, "Submit," he said, "I have submitted [in Islam] to the Lord of the worlds.""*

This further criticizes the people of the book and the non-muslims of Mecca, and by extension, warns the muslims, that Allah, the Exalted, does not grant His mercy to people based on worldly factors, such as lineage. His mercy is only obtained when one practically submits to His obedience. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A muslim must understand that when they prioritize following and obeying social media, society, fashion, culture or their own desires, over obeying Allah, the Exalted, then they have submitted to these things practically even if they verbally declare submission to Allah, the Exalted. This is how the people of the book and the non-muslims of Mecca behaved, and they clearly contradicted the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. It is vital to understand that humans have been

created in such a way that they must submit to something or someone. Whether this submission is to their own desires, other people, social media, fashion, culture or a God. Therefore, if one fails to submit to Allah, the Exalted, through their intention, speech and actions, they will inevitably submit to something else. This is why the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, emphatically stated that he had submitted to Allah, the Exalted, Lord of the worlds.

It is important to note that submission to Allah, the Exalted, does not involve perfection. It involves sincerely striving to obey Him by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and sincerely repenting by correcting one's behaviour and conduct towards Allah, the Exalted, and people whenever they happen to commit a sin. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 131:

"*When his Lord said to him, "Submit," he said, "I have submitted [in Islam] to the Lord of the worlds.""*

The Lord of the worlds was mentioned perhaps to highlight the fact that if one submits to Allah, the Exalted, then He will ensure they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds as He alone controls the entire universe. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who submits to other than Allah, the Exalted, which will cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, will find nothing except stress, anxiety and trouble in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world, as the Lord of the worlds, controls the entire the universe including their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights the fact that submitting to Allah, the Exalted, was the legacy the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, handed down to his children and in turn, his descendants, including his grandson, the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, did the same. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 131-132:

“When his Lord said to him, "Submit," he said, "I have submitted [in Islām] to the Lord of the worlds." And Abraham instructed his sons [to do the same] and [so did] Jacob, [saying], "O my sons, indeed Allāh has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims."”

The Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, was specifically mentioned as he was the ancestor of the people of the book who were also known as the children of Israel, meaning, the children of the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. This was another criticism to both the people of the book and the non-muslims of Mecca of how they were blatantly opposing the legacy of their ancestors: the legacy of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. This opposition reached its peak when they both rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, despite the fact both groups recognised the truthfulness of Islam.

The non-muslims of Mecca spent 40 years with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prior to his announcement of Prophethood and therefore knew he was no liar. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

“…for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"

And as they were masters of the Arabic language, they clearly recognised the Holy Quran was not the words of a created being. But as Islam contradicted their desires, many of the non-muslims of Mecca rejected Islam and therefore opposed the legacy of their ancestor, the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

As for the people of the book, they recognised the Holy Quran as they were familiar with its Author, Allah, the Exalted, and they recognised both the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had both been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

But as Islam contradicted their desires, most of the people of the book rejected Islam and therefore opposed the legacy of their ancestor, the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 132:

“And Abraham instructed his sons [to do the same] and [so did] Jacob, [saying], "O my sons, indeed Allāh has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims."”

Muslims must encourage the next generation to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by leading by example, just like the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, did. Leading by example involves learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that others recognize its truthfulness through their actions and speech. Then muslims must dedicate time to teaching the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to the next generation so that they understand the truthfulness of Islam through evidence, instead of through blind imitation. This will ensure they remain firm on the teachings of Islam throughout their lives. It is sad to observe how most muslim parents are extremely eager in teaching the next generation worldly knowledge which leads to worldly

success yet they neglect their religious education and instead hand their religious education over to others, even though it is their duty to teach their children the foundations of Islam directly. Even though encouraging the next generation to gain worldly knowledge is praiseworthy, none the less, parents must not neglect the teaching of religious knowledge. Sending children to Mosques to learn how to recite the Holy Quran without understanding is simply not good enough. A teenager needs to accept Islam based on evidence, not blind imitation, otherwise they will only drift away from Islam with the passing of time as they will observe Islam as a part of culture which can be discarded over time. When one accepts Islam based on evidence they will understand that Islam is a way of life, which must be applied in every situation and applied when one uses every blessing they have been granted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 132:

“And Abraham instructed his sons [to do the same] and [so did] Jacob, [saying], "O my sons, indeed Allāh has chosen for you this religion…””

Allah, the Exalted, has chosen Islam as the religion for mankind as it best suits their nature and as it leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. As Allah, the Exalted, created mankind, He alone knows what code of conduct suits their nature and abilities. When one abandons this divine code of conduct and instead follows a man made code of conduct it will only ever lead to an imbalanced mental and physical state, as it is not perfectly designed for the nature of humans. No matter how much advancements people make, in respect to knowledge about the mental and physical states of humans, they will never be able to discover every thing possible in order

to create the perfect code of conduct which leads to a balanced mental and physical state. It is an undeniable fact that the one whose mental and physical state are imbalanced will never obtain peace of mind. One must therefore accept and act on the teachings of Islam for their own sake just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor knowing it is best for their mental and physical wellbeing, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 132:

“And Abraham instructed his sons [to do the same] and [so did] Jacob, [saying], "O my sons, indeed Allāh has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims."”

This verse makes it clear that being muslim today does not guarantee one will die a muslim tomorrow. This is because faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience. Just like a plant will die if it fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, so may well the faith of a muslim if they fail to nourish it with acts of obedience. Therefore, one must ensure they strengthen their faith by learning and acting on Islamic teachings so that they die as a muslim. This is further supported by a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person will be resurrected in the same state they died in. So if they died as a firm muslim, then they will be raised as a firm muslim. And the state of one’s death is determined by the way they lived.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 132:

“And Abraham instructed his sons [to do the same] and [so did] Jacob, [saying], "O my sons, indeed Allāh has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims."”

This also highlights the fact that each person must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as one’s lineage or connection to a pious person will not save them if they fail to obey Allah, the Exalted, themself.

Allah, the Exalted, further highlights the importance of sincerely obeying Him and how the past Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, such as the ancestor of the people of the book, the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, persisted on this attitude and always encouraged the next generation to do the same. Sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings, was so important to them that even in their final moments on this Earth they discussed it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 133:

“Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?"…”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, also emphasized the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in his final moments when he urged people to adhere to the obligatory prayers, as they are the central pillar of a person's faith. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2698.

This was another criticism of the people of the book who claimed to be following in the footsteps of their ancestor, the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, yet failed to follow his attitude of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and urging others to do the same till his final breath. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 133:

"Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?"…"

The Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, did not ask who his children would worship after him but asked what they would worship after him. He was reminding his children that one can easily worship lifeless things, such as social media, fashion, culture and one's desires, just like they can worship a living entity. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

"Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?..."

One must therefore ensure they prioritise the worship and obedience of Allah, the Exalted, over all else. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who prioritises obeying and following other things will misuse the blessings they have been granted. This in turn will lead to stress, difficulties and misery in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights the sincerity of the children of the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, which completely opposed the insincerity possessed by their descendants, the people of the book. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 133:

"*Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Eesaac - one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.""*

The fact they mentioned their great uncle, the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, before they mentioned their grandfather, the Holy Prophet Ishaaq, peace be upon them, indicates that unlike the people of the book, the children of the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, did not possess any jealousy for the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, or his lineage, which included the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Instead, they were one united family who had completely submitted to Allah, the Exalted, in every aspect of their lives.

Due to changes in their divine scriptures which had been introduced by misguided people, the people of the book based their whole faith on their lineage. They claimed that it was their lineage which gave them superiority over the rest of mankind and was therefore one of the reasons why they rejected the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he belonged to a different lineage. Accepting and following him would destroy the foundation on which their faith was based on and it would directly contradict their claim of superiority. This is something they could not accept. Their whole attitude therefore completely contradicted the way of their ancestors, the Holy Prophet Ibrahim and his family, peace be upon them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 133:

"*Or were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Eesaac - one God. And we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.""*

Generally speaking, this incident also indicates the importance of muslims being more concerned with the religious education and faith of their children over worldly things. Sadly, the opposite is true amongst most muslims today who are more concerned with their children's future in worldly matters. Even though being concerned with worldly matters is acceptable in Islam yet it should not be prioritized over religious matters in respect to oneself or their

dependents. Worldly matters are only a means to serving one's religious matters so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. This is achieved when they utilize their worldly resources in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that one's lineage will not aid them at all in this world or the next, if they themself fail to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 134:

"*That was a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do.*"

This destroyed the false belief adopted by the people of the book, the non-muslims of Mecca, and even by some muslims today, who believe their lineage and connection to pious people, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is enough to guarantee them salvation in both worlds. Believing this is highly disrespectful towards Allah, the Exalted, as it would suggest He behaves in a bias and even racist way when He does not. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has repeatedly warned against this attitude also. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, he clearly warned that a person's lineage will not advance them on Judgement Day if they lack good deeds. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 39:

“And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives.”

And chapter 31 Luqman, verse 33:

“O mankind, fear your Lord and fear a Day when no father will avail his son, nor will a son avail his father at all…”

A muslim must therefore practically follow in the footsteps of their pious ancestors so that they join them in the hereafter. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they follow the footsteps of the disobedient, then they may well be gathered with them on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 134:

“*That was a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do.”*

This verse also reminds people that they should avoid the mentality of comparing their own actions to the actions of others in order to justify their own laziness or their own bad conduct. This often occurs when one constantly compares their own conduct with the conduct of others who appear worse than them. For example, a muslim who does not pray will compare themself to a murderer thereby justifying their own lack of obedience to Allah, the Exalted. As indicated by the end of verse 134, this attitude may well make a foolish person feel better in this world but it will not aid them in the hereafter, as a person will not be asked about the conduct of others nor will they be compared to the conduct of others. The single benchmark which every person will be compared to is the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. In this age, this refers to how much one learns and acts on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Similarly, a person must not make excuses for their lack of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by claiming others are in a better position to obey Allah, the Exalted. For example, the one who works full time should not make themself feel better by claiming that it is easy for someone else to dedicate their energy and time to studying Islamic knowledge as they only work part time. One must avoid this attitude as it will only fuel laziness. Instead, one must concentrate on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, even if this means they perform less good deeds than others, as Allah, the Exalted, observes quality not quantity.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 134:

"*That was a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do.*"

This verse also reminds muslims to concentrate on their own conduct in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people, as this is what they will be questioned about on Judgement Day. All the things one will not be questioned about, such as the conduct of the former generations, must be avoided as delving in these issues only wastes one's precious time. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, that a muslim will not make their faith excellent until they avoid the things which do not concern them. Minding one's business must therefore be applied in every aspect of one's life.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 135-138

وَقَالُوا۟ كُونُوا۟ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَـٰرَىٰ تَهْتَدُوا۟ قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

قُولُوٓا۟ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسْمَـٰعِيلَ وَإِسْحَـٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَٱلْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَآ أُوتِىَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَآ أُوتِىَ ٱلنَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِمِثْلِ مَآ ءَامَنتُم بِهِۦ فَقَدِ ٱهْتَدَوا۟ ۖ وَّإِن تَوَلَّوْا۟ فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِى شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾

صِبْغَةَ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ ٱللَّهِ صِبْغَةً ۖ وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ عَـٰبِدُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

“They say, "Be Jews or Christians [so] you will be guided." Say, "Rather, [we follow] the religion of Abraham, inclining toward truth, and he was not of the polytheists."

Say, [O believers], "We have believed in Allah and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Eesaac and Jacob and the [his] Descendants [al-Asbāṭ] and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We

make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him."

So if they [the people of the book] believe in the same as you believe in, then they have been [rightly] guided; but if they turn away, they are only in dissension, and Allah will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the Hearing, the Knowing.

[And say, "Ours is] the color [religion] of Allah. And who is better than Allah in [ordaining] religion? And we are worshippers of Him.""

The scholars from the people of the book, the Jews and Christians, living in Medina would urge others, such as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to follow their religions despite the fact they both recognized the truthfulness of Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 135:

“They say, "Be Jews or Christians [so] you will be guided."…”

The scholars from the people of the book recognized the Holy Quran as they were familiar with its Author, Allah, the Exalted. And they recognized its truthfulness as both the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, were discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

They intentionally tried to misguide others, as they feared they would lose their authority and influence within their society if the general masses accepted Islam. One must therefore avoid the excess love for worldly things, such as wealth and social status, as it can cause them to compromise on their faith. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, that craving for wealth and social status is more destructive to a person's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves that are let loose on a herd of sheep. One must overcome excess love for worldly things by understanding that it will only benefit them in both worlds if they use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who misuses the things they have been granted will find that the very worldly things they possess will become a source of stress, difficulties and misery for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as Allah, the Exalted, controls their spiritual hearts, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 135:

“They say, "Be Jews or Christians [so] you will be guided."…”

This verse also warns against blindly imitating others, as it often leads to misguidance. One must avoid behaving like cattle and use the common sense they have been granted in order to sincerely search and accept the truth based on clear evidence. Unlike other religions and ways of life, Islam has always encouraged people to use their common sense and accept Islam

and other truthful matters based on clear evidence instead of blind imitation. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….""

In addition, a person must ensure they only direct others in a good way as the one who advises others towards misguidance, such as committing sins, will carry the sin of every person they misguide. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674. A person must therefore advise each other based on knowledge and clear evidence to ensure they direct them correctly in both religious and worldly matters.

Allah, the Exalted, then criticizes the attitude of the people of the book, who intentionally attempted to misguide others while claiming they were rightly guided, as they were upholding the legacy of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, even though they were contradicting his way, the way of sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 135:

“They say, "Be Jews or Christians [so] you will be guided." Say, "Rather, [we follow] the religion of Abraham, inclining toward truth, and he was not of the polytheists.""

Inclining toward truth could mean that whenever the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, faced any situation or interacted with any blessing he was granted, his intention, speech and actions always were directed to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This ensured he did not associate partners with Allah, the Exalted, whether through his intention, by acting for the sake of anyone other than Allah, the Exalted, through his speech, by speaking in a way which displeased Allah, the Exalted, and through his actions, by using misusing the blessings he had been granted. This is true submission to Allah, the Exalted, the way of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and the way of Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 135:

"…*Say, "Rather, [we follow] the religion of Abraham, inclining toward truth, and he was not of the polytheists.""*

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that neither the people of the book nor the non-muslims of Mecca truly believed in Him, even though they both claimed otherwise. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 136:

"Say, [O believers], "We have believed in Allāh and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants [al-Asbāṭ] and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him.""

The non-muslims of Mecca and the Christians associated partners with Allah, the Exalted, while the Jews disbelieved in Him, as they cherry picked which Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, to accept and which to reject and which divine revelations to accept and which to reject. Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that belief in Him is incomplete until one believes in the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and what was granted to them. He also makes it clear that His religion has always been the same throughout the ages, the religion of Islam, meaning, the religion of submitting to Him alone. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in divine teachings. The one who therefore fails to do this has not believed correctly in Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, or the divine revelations granted to them, even if they claim faith verbally in them, just like the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book did. This therefore indicates the importance of actualizing one's faith according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as verbally declaring faith without supporting it with actions is simply not good enough. In fact, as indicated by the end of verse 136, combining faith with actions is the very definition of a muslim. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 136:

"…and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him."

In addition, a muslim must avoid following in the footsteps of the people of the book who cherry picked which Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and divine revelation to accept and which ones to reject, by cherry picking which Islamic teachings they should accept and act on and which Islamic teachings they should ignore, as it contradicts their desires. A muslim must submit completely to every teaching of Islam to the best of their ability even if it

contradicts their desires as this is the very definition of submitting to Allah, the Exalted, which is the legacy of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. The cherry picker only obeys and worships their desires, not Allah, the Exalted, even if they claim otherwise. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

“Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?...”

Allah, the Exalted, then emphasizes that real belief consists of following in the footsteps of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, which in turn is the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 137:

“So if they believe in the same as you believe in, then they have been [rightly] guided…”

This verse can be translated to mean if they, the people of the book, believe in Allah, the Exalted, like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, believe in Him, then they would be rightly guided. This would indicate that Allah, the Exalted, does not expect people to match the high level of faith the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, possessed, as He did not say people need to believe in exactly the same way as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did in order to obtain right guidance, as this would be virtually impossible to achieve. One must therefore abandon poor excuses which prevents them from fulfilling their potential. Instead, they must

strive to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, according to their potential, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, this verse indicates the importance of strictly adhering to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at all times and avoiding acting on other sources of religious knowledge, even if they lead to good deeds, as this contradicts the path of right guidance. The simple fact is that the more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. This warning has also been given in verse 137. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 137:

"So if they believe in the same as you believe in, then they have been [rightly] guided; but if they turn away, they are only in dissension…"

Straying away from the two sources of guidance will only lead to disunity. This is quite evident when one observes the muslim nation today and how they have become disunited into groups as they each adhere to different sources of religious knowledge and behave as if the principles of Islam revolve around this knowledge taken from other sources even though it does not. Muslims must avoid adopting this attitude, which was adopted by the

past nations who desired leadership and therefore split off from the fundamental principles of the faith outlined in their divine scriptures. Instead, muslims must strive to learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will lead to unity amongst the muslims just like it did with the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This will also ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. The one who remains firm on this attitude will be protected and guided by Allah, the Exalted, through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 137:

"…and Allāh will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the Hearing, the Knowing."

Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that the enemies of Islam, the people of the book living in Medina and the non-muslims of Mecca, could not harm the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and by extension his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, as long as they remained firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This protection is by extension offered to anyone who follows in their footsteps. A muslim will face difficulties in life but as long as they remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, they will be protected and guided through every situation, whether it is a time of ease or a time of difficulty. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

"…And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out"

This is obviously easy for Allah, the Exalted, as He hears all that occurs within the creation and knows what they do. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 137:

"…And He is the Hearing, the Knowing."

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that He alone knows the best code of conduct, the best way of life which suits people, so that they obtain a balanced mental and physical state at all times, which in turn leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 138:

"[And say, "Ours is] the religion of Allāh. And who is better than Allāh in [ordaining] religion?..."

As Allah, the Exalted, created humans and knows everything about them, He alone is in the best position to grant them a code of conduct which suits their nature, abilities, mental and physical states. No matter how advanced a society becomes in respect to understanding the mental and physical states of humans, they will never obtain complete knowledge on it. As a result, any code of conduct they create will never be best suited to the nature of humans. This will lead to an imbalanced mental and physical state, which

in turn prevents one from obtaining peace of mind and body. As indicted by the end of verse 138, the one who understands this simple fact will therefore accept and act on the code of conduct granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, knowing it is best for them, even if it contradicts their desires. They will behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 138:

"…And we are worshippers of Him."

In addition, a person must remember that Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the universe including the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind. Therefore, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind and who does not. The one who sincerely obeys Him, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will be granted peace of mind and body in both worlds, even if they face difficulties throughout their life. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who follows a different code of conduct, which will only cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, will obtain nothing except stress, difficulties and trouble in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 138:

“[And say, "Ours is] the color [religion] of Allah. And who is better than Allah in [ordaining] religion? And we are worshippers of Him."”

Just like a colour dye completely covers a garment and is permanent, similarly, a muslim’s faith must completely encompass every aspect of their life, such as their personal and work life, and their entire day. They must apply the teachings of Islam in every situation they experience and every worldly blessing they interact with, such as their time and wealth. The religious dye of Islam must therefore infiltrate and cover their intention, so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and not for the sake of anything or anyone else. It must infiltrate and cover their speech, so that they speak in obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. And the religious dye of Islam must infiltrate and cover their actions, so that they only act in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Behaving in this manner is truly obeying and worshipping Allah, the Exalted, and upholding the legacy of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 138:

“…And we are worshippers of Him."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 138:

“[And say, "Ours is] the color [religion] of Allah. And who is better than Allah in [ordaining] religion? And we are worshippers of Him."”

As the colour of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, Islam, is one, it means that every social and worldly barrier which separates people, such as gender, ethnicity and casts, have no value in Islam, as all muslims are dyed in the single colour of Islam. This indicates the importance of equality in Islam. A person is only superior to others depending on how much the dye of Islam has infiltrated their life, meaning, how much they obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. The more one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, the higher rank they possess. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

But it is important to note that as the intention of people is hidden and known only to Allah, the Exalted, one cannot judge whether someone else is better than others, as they are unaware of their hidden intention, even if observe their good actions.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 138:

“[And say, "Ours is] the color [religion] of Allah. And who is better than Allah in [ordaining] religion? And we are worshippers of Him."”

As muslims are dyed in the colour of Islam, this indicates that they are the representatives of Allah, the Exalted, just like a particular group of people represent an organization when they wear the uniform of that organization, such as the police force. Muslims must therefore represent Allah, the Exalted, correctly by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This will ensure they fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and all people. This in turn will show the non-muslims the upright nature of Islam. Whereas, if they fail to obey Allah, the Exalted, then they will undoubtedly fail to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, or people. This will cause them to misrepresent Islam to non-muslims, which is something they will have to answer for in both worlds.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 139

قُلْ أَتُحَاجُّونَنَا فِي ٱللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَآ أَعْمَٰلُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَٰلُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُۥ مُخْلِصُونَ



“Say, "Do you argue with us about Allah while He is our Lord and your Lord? For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. And we are sincere [in deed and intention] to Him."”

Allah, the Exalted, then criticizes both the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book for their argumentative mentality even though they both claimed to be believers in Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 139:

“Say, "Do you argue with us about Allah while He is our Lord and your Lord?...””

If they accepted Allah, the Exalted, as their Lord they would have accepted and followed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this was the clear and unambiguous command of Allah, the Exalted. The non-muslims of Mecca spent 40 years with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, prior to his announcement of Prophethood and therefore knew he was no liar nor did he study any type of religious knowledge prior to his announcement of Prophethood. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

“…for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"

As they were masters of the Arabic language, they knew the Holy Quran were not the words of a created being. This was enough for them to support their claim in believing in Allah, the Exalted, by believing in Him correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings.

As for the people of the book, they recognized the Holy Quran as they were familiar with its Author, Allah, the Exalted, who had revealed the previous divine scriptures to them. They also recognized the truthfulness of Islam as both the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran had been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

This was enough for them to support their claim in believing in Allah, the Exalted, by believing in Him correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 139:

“*Say, "Do you argue with us about Allah while He is our Lord and your Lord?...””*

This verse also indicates that when one believes in Allah, the Exalted, correctly, meaning, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it will prevent arguments amongst people and lead to unity, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were unified as they all believed in Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Muslims must therefore submit to Allah, the Exalted, correctly, according to the teachings of Islam by placing His sincere obedience above all else. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in Islamic teachings. But when muslims place the obedience of other things, such as society, culture and fashion, above the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, then it will only lead to arguments and disunity. This is quite evident in this day and age, even within a single muslim family.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 139:

“*Say, "Do you argue with us about Allah while He is our Lord and your Lord?...””*

This verse reminds muslims as the Lord of the previous nations and the muslim nation is One in the same, therefore, the way Allah, the Exalted,

treated the previous nations will be applied to the muslim nation also. Meaning, just like Allah, the Exalted, granted peace of mind and success to the members of the previous nations who sincerely obeyed Him, by using the blessings they were granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in divine teachings, He will also reward the muslims who do the same. Conversely, just like He punished the members of the past nations who persisted on His disobedience, despite the fact they claimed to be devout believer in Him, He will also punish the muslims who behave in the same manner. The tradition of Allah, the Exalted, has never changed. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

“…But you will never find in the way [established method] of Allāh any change, and you will never find in the way of Allāh any alteration.”

Therefore, a muslim must avoid the attitude of the people of the book of believing they are special and therefore guaranteed salvation in both worlds, even if they persistently disobey Allah, the Exalted. As this was not true for the past nations, it is definitely not true for the muslim nation either. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 18:

“But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of Allāh and His beloved." Say, "Then why does He punish you for your sins?" Rather, you are human beings from among those He has created…”

A fundamental principle of Islam is then mentioned. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 139:

"*Say, "Do you argue with us about Allah while He is our Lord and your Lord? For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds…""*

The duty of a muslim is not to force their belief, opinions or way of life on other people as this often leads to arguments and debates. Their duty is to make the truth clear to people using strong evidence and then let others make their own choice what to follow and what to reject. This applies to both worldly and religious matters. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 29:

"And say, "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve."…"

A muslim should concentrate their efforts on educating those who approach Islam with an open mind and ignore those who are only interested in arguing and debates, as this leads to a waste of time and energy. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 139:

"*…For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds…"*

This also indicates the importance of one concentrating on correcting their own deeds first before concerning themself with the deeds of others. A muslim must sincerely strive to learn and act on Islamic teachings in order to correct their intention, so that they only act to please Allah, the Exalted, and they must correct their speech, by speaking what is good or remaining silent and correct their actions, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. After actively struggling in this way, is a muslim in a position to concern themself with the deeds of others. This discussion has been indicated in the last part of 139. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 139:

"…And we are sincere [in deed and intention] to Him."

This discussion does not mean one must achieve perfection before they advise others about their conduct, as achieving perfection is not possible. This discussion means that one must struggle to learn and act on Islamic teachings while advising others to do the same, as the ignorant person will only misguide others.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 139:

"*…For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds…"*

It is important to note that this verse does not mean one should remain heedless to the actions of others and only concentrate on their own faith, as advising others on good and warning them against bad is a duty on all muslims according to their strength and according to the teachings of Islam. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong…"

The minimum duty is that a person must encourage their family to do good and warn them against bad things, even if the wider society seems to be lost in their own way and thinking. A muslim must remember that a rotten apple will only contaminate good apples. Similarly, if evil is left unchecked then it will eventually affect the good elements of society. A muslim must advise what is good and warn against bad but after they have done this according to teachings of Islam, they should avoid arguing with people, as they have fulfilled their duty to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 164:

"And when a community among them said, "Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allāh is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?" they [the advisors] said, "To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 139:

"*…For us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds…"*

Generally speaking, this verse also reminds muslims to avoid the misguided attitude whereby one believes the good actions and conduct of other people who are connected to them will save them on Judgement Day even if they themselves persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Even though intercession on Judgement Day is a fact, none the less, adopting this attitude is mocking the concept of intercession and the one who behaves in this manner may well be deprived of the intercession of others on Judgement Day. It clear from the conduct of the leaders of mankind, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, that each person must concentrate on sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in divine teachings, and only then should they hope for intercession from others on Judgement Day.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 139:

"…And we are sincere [in deed and intention] to Him."

One’s intention is the inward foundation of Islam. If one’s foundation is corrupt then everything they build on top of it will be corrupt. Therefore, a muslim must ensure they adopt sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, by only acting for His sake. The one who acts for other than Allah, the Exalted, or acts for others with Him, will not gain any reward from Him. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A sign of a good intention is when one does not expect nor hope for any reward or gratitude from people.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 140-141

أَمۡ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمَ وَإِسۡمَٰعِيلَ وَإِسۡحَٰقَ وَيَعۡقُوبَ وَٱلۡأَسۡبَاطَ كَانُواْ هُودًا أَوۡ نَصَٰرَىٰۗ قُلۡ ءَأَنتُمۡ أَعۡلَمُ أَمِ ٱللَّهُۗ وَمَنۡ أَظۡلَمُ مِمَّن كَتَمَ شَهَٰدَةً عِندَهُۥ مِنَ ٱللَّهِۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعۡمَلُونَ ١٤٠

تِلۡكَ أُمَّةٞ قَدۡ خَلَتۡۖ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتۡ وَلَكُم مَّا كَسَبۡتُمۡۖ وَلَا تُسۡـَٔلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُواْ يَعۡمَلُونَ ١٤١

“Or do you say that Abraham and Ishmael and Eesaac and Jacob and the Descendants were Jews or Christians? Say, "Are you more knowing or is Allah?" And who is more unjust than one who conceals a testimony he has from Allah? And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

That was a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do.”

Allah, the Exalted, criticizes the people of the book for their illogical claims. They claimed their ancestors, the Holy Prophet Ibrahim and his family, peace be upon them, were Jews or Christians, even though the concept of Judaism and the Trinity were introduced much after them, even much after the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, the last Holy Prophet before the final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 140:

"*Or do you say that Abraham and Ishmael and Eesaac and Jacob and the Descendants were Jews or Christians?...*"

And chapter 3 Alee Imran, verses 65-67:

"O People of the Scripture, why do you argue about Abraham while the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him? Then will you not reason? Here you are - those who have argued about that of which you have [some] knowledge, but why do you argue about that of which you have no knowledge? And Allāh knows, while you know not. Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to Allāh]. And he was not of the polytheists."

Allah, the Exalted, reinforces the fact that He alone knows all things and is therefore in the best position to state the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 140:

“…Say, "Are you more knowing or is Allāh?"…”

As the scholars from the people of the book recognized the Holy Quran as the truth, as they were familiar with its Author, Allah, the Exalted, and they recognized the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had both been discussed in their divine scriptures, they, the people of the book therefore, knew the truth was stated by Allah, the Exalted, in the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 140:

“…And who is more unjust than one who conceals a testimony he has from Allāh?...”

They concealed the truth as Islam directly challenged their worldly desires and how they misused the blessings they had been granted. As they wanted to continue to use the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to themselves and as they feared losing their social positions within society, they rejected Islam and the clear truth which they were fully aware of. Accepting the truth of Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was in fact a covenant taken from their ancestors, the children of Israel, and it was passed down to subsequent generations until the coming of Islam. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verses 155-157:

“And Moses chose from his people seventy men for Our appointment. And when the earthquake seized them, he said, "My Lord, if You had willed, You could have destroyed them before and me [as well]. Would You destroy us for what the foolish among us have done? This is not but Your trial by which You send astray whom You will and guide whom You will. You are our Protector, so forgive us and have mercy upon us; and You are the best of forgivers. And decree for us in this world [that which is] good and [also] in the Hereafter; indeed, we have turned back to You." [Allāh] said, "My punishment - I afflict with it whom I will, but My mercy encompasses all things." So I will decree it [especially] for those who fear Me and give zakāh and those who believe in Our verses. Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written [i.e., described] in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and prohibits them from what is wrong and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them. So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him - it is those who will be the successful.”

Generally speaking, muslims also took a covenant with Allah, the Exalted, when they accepted Islam as their faith. The covenant of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, at all times, in every situation. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Muslims must therefore avoid following in the footsteps of the people of the book who failed to fulfil their covenant to Allah, the Exalted, as this only leads to misery, stress and trouble in both worlds, as the very worldly blessings one obtains through breaking their covenant with Allah, the Exalted, will become a source of their problems in both worlds, even if they happen to experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whereas, the one who fulfils their covenant with Allah, the Exalted, will find that He grants them peace of mind and success in both worlds, a promise from the Lord of the worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whichever path a muslim decides to choose either way they will face the consequences of their actions in both worlds, just like the people before them did, as nothing escapes the knowledge of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 140:

“…And Allāh is not unaware of what you do.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 140:

“…Say, "Are you more knowing or is Allāh?"…”

Generally speaking, this is an important principle to understand and act upon in every aspect of one’s life. A muslim must understand that their knowledge is extremely limited and they must therefore accept that whatever Allah, the Exalted, has decreed for them is best, even if they lack the knowledge to understand how it is best for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

The one who understands this important principle will remain patient in all circumstances, which involves avoiding complaining through one's words or actions while maintaining their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in divine teachings. Whereas, the one who fails to understand this important principle will quickly become impatient whenever they face situations which contradict their desires. This only leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 140:

"…And Allāh is not unaware of what you do."

This verse also reminds muslims that a person should not be fooled by the respite they are granted by Allah, the Exalted. Just because a person is not punished immediately for their sins it does not mean they will not be punished at all. Allah, the Exalted, gives time to people so that they have the opportunity to sincerely repent and reform their conduct. But if a person persists on their disobedience believing they have escaped accountability, then it is only a matter of time before they face the consequences of their actions as nothing escapes Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 140:

"…And Allāh is not unaware of what you do."

Allah, the Exalted, then reiterates that even though the previous Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, only ever preached the concept of complete submission to Allah, the Exalted, meaning, Islam, none the less, each person, past or present, will face the consequences of their own choices and actions and no one will be granted salvation based on the actions of their ancestors, irrespective of the actions they performed or who they were. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 141:

"*That was a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do."*

This destroyed the false belief adopted by the people of the book, the non-muslims of Mecca, and even by some muslims today, who believe their lineage and connection to pious people, such as the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, is enough to guarantee them salvation in both worlds. Believing this is highly disrespectful towards Allah, the Exalted, as it would suggest He behaves in a bias and even racist way when He does not. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has repeatedly warned against this attitude also. For example, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853, he clearly warned that a person's lineage will not advance them on Judgement Day if they lack good deeds. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 39:

"And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives."

And chapter 31 Luqman, verse 33:

"O mankind, fear your Lord and fear a Day when no father will avail his son, nor will a son avail his father at all…"

A muslim must therefore practically follow in the footsteps of their pious ancestors so that they join them in the hereafter. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But if they follow the footsteps of the disobedient, then they may well be gathered with them on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 134:

"*That was a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned…"*

This verse makes it clear that each person will face the consequences of their actions therefore claiming belief in Allah, the Exalted, verbally while disobeying Him through actions will not lead to peace of mind and success in both worlds. One must remember that faith is like a plant which must be

nourished with actions. Just like a plant will die when it fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, so may well the faith of a person die if they fail to nourish it with acts of obedience. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in divine teachings. Put simply, if a person lacks good deeds they should not expect to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 134:

"*That was a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do.*"

This verse also reminds people that they should avoid the mentality of comparing their own actions to the actions of others in order to justify their own laziness or their own bad conduct. This often occurs when one constantly compares their own conduct with the conduct of others who appear worse than them. For example, a muslim who does not pray will compare themself to a murderer thereby justifying their own lack of obedience to Allah, the Exalted. As indicated by the end of verse 134, this attitude may well make a foolish person feel better in this world but it will not aid them in the hereafter, as a person will not be asked about the conduct of others nor will they be compared to the conduct of others. The single benchmark which every person will be compared to is the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. In this age, this refers to how much one learns and acts on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Similarly, a person must not make excuses for their lack of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, by claiming others are in a better position to obey Allah, the Exalted. For example, the one who works full time should not make themself feel better by claiming that it is easy for someone else to dedicate their energy and time to studying Islamic knowledge as they only work part time. One must avoid this attitude as it will only fuel laziness. Instead, one must concentrate on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, even if this means they perform less good deeds than others, as Allah, the Exalted, observes quality not quantity.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 134:

"*That was a nation which has passed on. It will have [the consequence of] what it earned, and you will have what you have earned. And you will not be asked about what they used to do."*

This verse also reminds muslims to concentrate on their own conduct in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people, as this is what they will be questioned about on Judgement Day. All the things one will not be questioned about, such as the conduct of the former generations, must be avoided as delving in these issues only wastes one's precious time. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2317, that a muslim will not make their faith excellent until they avoid the things

which do not concern them. Minding one’s business must therefore be applied in every aspect of one’s life.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 142-145

۞ سَيَقُولُ ٱلسُّفَهَآءُ مِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَا وَلَّىٰهُمْ عَن قِبْلَتِهِمُ ٱلَّتِي كَانُواْ عَلَيْهَا قُل لِّلَّهِ ٱلْمَشْرِقُ وَٱلْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٢﴾

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَٰكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِّتَكُونُواْ شُهَدَآءَ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ ٱلرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا ٱلْقِبْلَةَ ٱلَّتِي كُنتَ عَلَيْهَآ إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَن يَتَّبِعُ ٱلرَّسُولَ مِمَّن يَنقَلِبُ عَلَىٰ عَقِبَيْهِ وَإِن كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ هَدَى ٱللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ ٱللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَٰنَكُمْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِٱلنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾

قَدْ نَرَىٰ تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي ٱلسَّمَآءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَىٰهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنتُمْ فَوَلُّواْ وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُۥ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

وَلَئِنْ أَتَيْتَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ بِكُلِّ ءَايَةٍ مَّا تَبِعُواْ قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَآ أَنتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُم بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَئِنِ ٱتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَآءَهُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَكَ مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذًا لَّمِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

“The foolish among the people will say, "What has turned them away from their qiblah [prayer direction], which they used to face?" Say, "To Allah belongs the east and the west. He guides whom He wills to a straight path."

And thus We have made you a median [balanced] community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you. And We did not make the qiblah [prayer direction] which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided. And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith [your previous prayers]. Indeed Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful.

We have certainly seen the turning of your face [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qiblah [prayer direction] with which you will be pleased. So turn your face [yourself] toward al-Masjid al-Ḥaram. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces [yourselves] toward it [in prayer]. Indeed, those who have been given the Scripture [the Jews and the Christians] well know that it is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do.

And if you brought to those who were given the Scripture every sign, they would not follow your qiblah [prayer direction]. Nor will you be a follower of their qiblah. Nor would they be followers of one another's qiblah. So if you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, indeed, you would then be among the wrongdoers.”

Generally speaking, the foolish say foolish things as they lack knowledge of the seriousness of the consequences of their speech. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 142:

"The foolish among the people will say…"

One must avoid this attitude by learning and acting on the teachings of Islam so that they become aware of the importance of controlling their speech, as it is one of the main causes of people entering Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. Speech can be split into three categories. The first category is sinful speech, such as backbiting, which must be avoided at all times. The second category of speech is good speech in respect to worldly and religious matters. The final category of speech is vain speech. Even though this is not considered sinful, none the less, it often leads to sins. For example, vain speech often leads to backbiting others. In addition, vain speech will be a great regret for a person on Judgement Day, especially when they observe the potential reward they would have obtained if they avoided vain speech and instead spoke beneficial words. One must therefore avoid sinful and vain speech, by speaking good or remaining silent. The one who behaves in this manner will be rewarded even for their silence, as this has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176.

The main verses under discussion mention the changing of the focal point where all muslims turn to when they offer their prayers. Prior to migrating to Medina and up until the second year after migration, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may

Allah be pleased with them, would face towards Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem. During their stay in Mecca, this was achieved while facing the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, but in Medina the two directions could not be reconciled and so they faced Masjid Aqsa while turning their backs to Mecca. But as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yearned to face the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, in Mecca, Allah, the Exalted, changed the prayer direction towards it permanently. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir's, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 2, Page 248.

As the initial prayer direction was Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem, this pleased the people of the book, as it was their prayer direction also. In fact, they would use this as evidence against the muslims that they were on the right path as they faced the direction which pleased Allah, the Exalted. When the prayer direction was changed to Mecca it falsified their claim, which is indicated in verse 142. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 142:

"The foolish among the people will say, "What has turned them away from their qiblah, which they used to face?"…"

This statement was also their way of challenging the authenticity of Islam, as they claimed that if it was truly from Allah, the Exalted, then the muslims would have been guided to the correct focal direction from day one. Meaning, they would not need to change their prayer direction years later, if Islam was the truth.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that as He alone owns the entire creation, He decides when and what direction the muslims will face for their prayers. If He wants this direction to change every day, no one else has any say in the matter. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 142:

“…Say, "To Allāh belongs the east and the west…””

In addition, the focal point is more than just a direction for the prayer. It is in fact a reminder for muslims to constantly turn their intention, speech and actions in the direction which pleases Allah, the Exalted, just like their bodies turn towards Mecca for the prayer.

Generally speaking, as the entire creation belongs to and is under the complete control and jurisdiction of Allah, the Exalted, a person has no choice but to comply with His rules. Just like a person will face trouble if they fail to comply with the rules set by the government in charge of a particular country, so will they face trouble in both worlds if they fail to comply with the rules of the Owner of the east and west. A person may be able to leave a country if they are not pleased with its rules but they will not be able to escape to a place where the rules and jurisdiction of Allah, the Exalted, do not apply. Therefore, one must comply with these rules, for their own sake. The one who understands this fact will comply with the rules of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to obey Him by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As indicated by the

end of verse 142, this will ensure they are guided to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 142:

“…He guides whom He wills to a straight path."

Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to comply with the rules of Allah, the Exalted, within the universe, He alone owns, will not be guided to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Instead, the very worldly things they possess will become a source of stress and misery for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 142:

"*The foolish among the people will say, "What has turned them away from their qiblah [prayer direction], which they used to face?"…""*

This verse also makes it clear that not every criticism is worthy to be accepted and acted upon. Islam teaches that constructive criticism based on evidence and logic should be accepted and acted upon in both worldly and religious matters. But unconstructive criticism should be ignored, especially when it challenges the teachings of Islam, when it is not supported by evidence or logic and even if it comes from a beloved. Sadly, many are influenced emotionally and practically by the unconstructive criticism of others. A muslim must always remember to compare all the criticism they receive against the teachings of Islam, worldly evidence and logic before

accepting or rejecting it. As long as one adopts this mindset they will accept and act upon constructive criticism which improves their conduct towards Allah, the Exalted, and people and improves their worldly matters and they will know when to ignore unconstructive criticism without being negatively affected by it.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 142:

"*The foolish among the people will say, "What has turned them away from their qiblah [prayer direction], which they used to face?" Say, "To Allah belongs the east and the west…""*

Generally speaking, whenever one decides to take a path in life which differs from the path of those around them, it will often lead to criticism, even from one's own relatives. When one decides to take a different path, others will feel offended as it makes their path seem wrong, even if the person choosing the new path does not feel this way. In cases like this, a muslim must remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even if this leads to them facing criticism from those they expected support from, such as their relatives. The one who adheres to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will be granted right guidance in all their affairs, peace of mind and independence from those who criticise them, even if this takes some time. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 142:

“…He guides whom He wills to a straight path."

The guidance of Allah, the Exalted, is available for everyone, irrespective of any worldly things which separate people from others, such as social class, gender and ethnicity. But right guidance will only be obtained by those who strive to obtain it. This involves learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. But if a person chooses to ignore Islamic knowledge, even if they claim faith in Islam, then they will not obtain right guidance in this world, as obtaining guidance requires genuine effort, struggle and actions.

An important characteristic of the muslim community is then mentioned. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

“And thus We have made you a median community…”

Islam teaches balance in all of one’s affairs. A balance which will ensure one adequately fulfills the rights of Allah, the Exalted, the rights of people and their own rights, while obtaining a balanced mental and physical state so that justice and fairness prevails within society and so that they achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. An example of this balanced approach is that Islam does not teach muslims to abandon the world and only focus on achieving success in the hereafter. Nor does it teach them to ignore practically preparing for the hereafter while concentrating fully on achieving worldly success. Instead, it teaches muslims to make use of the lawful

worldly resources and opportunities they have been granted correctly, meaning, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Generally speaking, even though achieving a balanced mental and physical state is something all people, irrespective of their faith, desire, it can never be achieved solely based on knowledge possessed by people. No matter how much advancements are achieved into the study of the mental and physical states of humans, they will never be able to encompass it all. Allah, the Exalted, alone possesses this knowledge, as He alone created the human being. Therefore, a balanced mental and physical state, which leads to peace of mind, can only be achieved through the knowledge granted by Allah, the Exalted, which is the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

“And thus We have made you a median community…”

Islam corrected the extreme attitudes adopted by the previous nations in order to form a balanced religion. For example, some religions adopted a passive mentality whereby they failed to even defend themselves and those were being oppressed. Other religions adopted a harsh attitude which led to disunity. Some religions became extreme in adopting good morals yet abandoned the law, and other religions did the opposite. Some religions concentrated fully on this world, while others taught to concern oneself only with the hereafter. All of these, and more, extreme attitudes which were innovated over time were corrected by Islam. It achieved this by teaching

people to use the blessings they had been granted in the correct way so that they achieve a balanced state of mind and body which leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Whenever one abandons this approach they will eventually adopt an extreme attitude, which leads to an imbalanced state of mind and body, which in turn prevents one from obtaining peace of mind.

Allah, the Exalted, then outlined a further role of the muslim community. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"*And thus We have made you a median [balanced] community that you will be witnesses over the people…"*

The muslim nation can only be considered witnesses over the rest of mankind when they fulfil their role as the ambassadors of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh…"

This involves being a role model for the rest of mankind so that they recognize the truthfulness of Islam by observing the muslims in their

everyday activities. A muslim will only achieve this when they mould their character, speech and actions according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who fails to do this will misrepresent Islam and as a result they will cause non-muslims and other muslims to dislike Islam. A muslim accepted their role as the ambassador of Islam the moment they accepted Islam as their faith and if they fail to fulfil it, they will answer for their failure in this world and in the next. This has been indicated in the next part of verse 143. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"…that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you…"

The same way an ambassador of a king would be dismissed if they failed to represent the king correctly, so will the muslim face a penalty if they fail to represent Allah, the Exalted, and His religion correctly.

Allah, the Exalted, then explains a reason for changing the focal direction of the muslims from Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem to Masjid Al Haraam in Mecca. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"…And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels…"

The test is simple, whether one will follow whatever direction Allah, the Exalted, turns them towards in sincere obedience to Him or not. This test applies in every command, prohibition and advice given in Islamic teachings. Those who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and support their verbal declaration of faith with actions, will turn in every situation towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, even if it contradicts their desires or the desires of other people. Whereas, the person who only worships their own desires will only turn towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, when it suits them. Therefore, muslims are tested through the commands, prohibitions and advice given in Islamic teachings in order to make this difference in attitudes evident. Maintaining one's sincere obedience during every situation is the sign of a real believer who is committed to right guidance. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"…And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allāh has guided…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"…And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels…"

Another aspect of this test is to make evident who would remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, when the change of focal point was challenged by the people of the book. As mentioned earlier, the changing of the focal point was falsely used as evidence to suggest that Islam was not from Allah, the Exalted, as they claimed that the correct focal point would have been chosen from day one if Islam was true. But they failed to understand that the change in focal point was simply a test to see who would obey and who would disobey.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"…And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allāh has guided…"

This could also mean that the people of the book who accepted Islam or who were considering accepting Islam would have found this difficult as they were accustomed to facing Jerusalem for their prayers prior to the coming of Islam. But if they remained firm on the truth, they would have been granted right guidance by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"…And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allāh has guided…"

This could also mean that when the focal point of the muslims changed to Mecca, it became obvious to them that their interaction and struggle with the non-muslims of Mecca had not come to an end after migrating to Medina. Allah, the Exalted, would not choose a focal point which remained in the hands of idol worshippers. This meant it was only a matter of time before the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, would have to challenge the non-muslims of Mecca in order to restore the legacy of their ancestor, the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, of making the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba and Mecca itself as a beacon for the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, for all of humanity. Accepting this struggle was undoubtedly hard on the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, especially after the many years of persecution they were subjected to at the hands of the non-muslims of Mecca. But as they accepted their role as the slaves of Allah, the Exalted, they adhered to His sincere obedience and followed whatever path that was chosen for them by Allah, the Exalted. Generally speaking, a muslim must adopt this steadfast attitude whereby they remain firm on the correct path, the path of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, at all times irrespective of where this path leads them and whatever difficulties they must face along the way. Only through this behaviour will one obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, just like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, obtained it. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"…And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allāh has guided…"

One purpose of this change in the focal point was to make evident who was blinded by irrational prejudices and bound to foolish attachments to land and blood, and who, having liberated themself from those bonds, was capable of rising above these lowly attitudes and instead accept and adhere to the truth, whichever way it led them towards.

On the one hand were the Arabs who were steeped in their national and racial arrogance. For them, taking Jerusalem as their focal point, which was the original focal direction, was too hard a blow to their national vanity to be accepted with ease. On the other hand, the people of the book were essentially no different. They too were obsessed with racial pride so that it was difficult for them to accept any other than the focal point which they had inherited from the past. How could the people whose hearts were full of such idols respond to servanthood to Allah, the Exalted? Hence, Allah, the

Exalted, saw to it that the worshippers of such idols were distinguished from His genuine worshippers by first fixing Jerusalem as the focal point. This was bound to alienate all those who had worshipped Arabia and its customs. Later, changing the focal point to Mecca led to the alienation of those who were engrossed in the worship of the idol of Israel. Thus there were left with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, only those who truly worshipped and obeyed none but Allah, the Exalted.

Therefore, muslims must follow in the footsteps of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, by prioritizing the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, over all other things, such as nationalism, tribal affiliations, brotherhoods and ties of kinship.

When the prayer direction changed, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, asked the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, whether the prayers of the other Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who died before the change in the prayer direction, would be accepted. Allah, the Exalted, then revealed chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"…And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith [i.e., your previous prayers]. Indeed Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful."

This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 40. The first thing to note is the sincerity the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, possessed for one another. They were always concerned with the success of one another. Being sincere to others in this way is an essential aspect of Islam according to the Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 196. A person must rise above a self-centered attitude whereby they only care about their own wellbeing or the wellbeing of their loved ones. A muslim must instead adopt sincerity towards others irrespective of their bond with them. This is best achieved when one treats others in a way they themself wish to be treated by others. This is in fact the very definition of a true believer according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"…And never would Allah have caused you to lose your faith [i.e., your previous prayers]. Indeed Allah is, to the people, Kind and Merciful."

It is important to note that Allah, the Exalted, used the word faith in place of the prayers in this verse. This indicates that one cannot possess true faith without establishing the obligatory prayers. This, once again, highlights the importance of actualizing one's faith into actions. Faith alone has little value until it is supported by physical actions. The very definition of the word muslim means the one who has practically submitted to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, one must avoid the misguided attitude of claiming faith with their tongue while failing to show it in their actions. These actions involve using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who fails to actualize their faith should fear losing it. Faith is a like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience. Just like a plant which fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, will die, so may well the faith of a muslim who fails to nourish their faith with acts of obedience. This is the greatest loss. As indicated by the final part of verse 143, the acts of obedience required to achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds, are well within the strength and means of each person to do, as Allah, the Exalted, never burdens a soul with more than they can bear, whether these involve commands, prohibitions, advice or tests. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

"…Indeed Allāh is, to the people, Kind and Merciful."

In addition, the very strength, opportunity, ability, knowledge and inspiration to perform good deeds come from Allah, the Exalted, as well. Remembering this should prevent one from adopting pride over their acts of obedience. These are only a small part of the mercy and kindness of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

“…Indeed Allāh is, to the people, Kind and Merciful.”

Allah, the Exalted, then explains the means in which the focal point for the muslims was changed from Masjid Aqsa in Jerusalem to Masjid Al Haraam in Mecca. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 144:

“*We have certainly seen the turning of your face [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] toward the heaven, and We will surely turn you to a qiblah [prayer direction] with which you will be pleased. So turn your face [yourself] toward al-Masjid al-Ḥaram…”*

This is another place which highlights the immense rank of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. He desired the focal point to be the House of Allah, the Exalted, built by the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. As indicated by this verse, this immense rank was obtained through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, meaning, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, would turn in whichever direction Allah, the Exalted, commanded him to turn towards without showing any signs of hesitation or laziness. His every intention, word and action was always turned towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. In this case, he did not voice his desire, as he was content with whatever Allah, the Exalted, chose. A muslim must follow him in his sublime conduct by following the path set out by Allah, the Exalted, without hesitation or laziness by constantly turning their intention, words and actions towards the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times and they must learn to be

satisfied with the choices of Allah, the Exalted, instead of hastening towards telling Him what they desire, as a person's desires often lead them to trouble in both worlds. A muslim must remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and trust that whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them is best, even if they do not understand the wisdom behind His choices. This includes holding back from asking for worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, as a wise muslim does not know if what they desire is best for them or not. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Instead, they should ask for general worldly wellbeing and leave the specifics to Allah, the Exalted, the One who knows what is best for them. They must behave like a wise patient who trusts, accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 201:

"But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""

The one who behaves in this manner will always be turned towards the path which pleases them, even if this path was unclear to them beforehand, just like Allah, the Exalted, turned the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, towards the direction which pleased him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 144:

"…*and We will surely turn you to a qiblah [prayer direction] with which you will be pleased…"*

This attitude of following the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in his conduct has been indicated in the next part of verse 144. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 144:

"…*And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces [yourselves] toward it [in prayer]…"*

Allah, the Exalted, then criticises the people of the book for their criticism over the changing of the focal point, even though they knew that the focal point of the final nation, the muslim nation, was always meant to be the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, in Mecca, as this had been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 144:

"…Indeed, those who have been given the Scripture [the Jews and the Christians] well know that it is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do."

They had the habit of cherry picking from their divine teachings on what to act on and what to ignore. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 85:

"…Do you, then, believe in some parts of the Book, and disbelieve in others? So, what can be the punishment of those among you who do that, except disgrace in present life? And, on the Day of Judgement, they shall be turned to the most severe punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do."

A muslim must avoid this attitude as it leads to disgrace in both worlds. Instead, they must sincerely learn and act on all the teachings of Islam, even if their desires are challenged. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

A person must not be fooled by the respite granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, as He does not punish people immediately for their sins in order to give them a chance to repent and reform. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 61:

“And if Allāh were to impose blame on the people for their wrongdoing, He would not have left upon it [i.e., the earth] any creature, but He defers them for a specified term. And when their term has come, they will not remain behind an hour, nor will they precede [it].”

As clearly indicated in this verse, the respite Allah, the Exalted, grants is limited and if one fails to make use of the respite they have been granted then it is only a matter of time before they face the consequences of their actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 144:

“…And Allah is not unaware of what they do.”

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights the stubborn nature of the people of the book, who refused to accept the truth of Islam despite the fact they recognised the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had both been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 145:

“*And if you brought to those who were given the Scripture every sign, they would not follow your qiblah [prayer direction]. Nor will you be a follower of their qiblah. Nor would they be followers of one another's qiblah…”*

They only behaved in this manner as Islam challenged their worldly desires and would have prevented them from using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to themselves and as they feared Islam would have destroyed the high social status they had gained within their society.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 145:

“*And if you brought to those who were given the Scripture every sign, they would not follow your qiblah [prayer direction]…”*

This part of the verse also warns muslims of not wasting their time with explaining the truth to a person who has already made their mind up beforehand. This applies to both worldly and religious matters. The only one who deserves attention and care is the one who approaches each situation with an open mind and genuinely desires to understand and accept the truth. Dedicating time to those who have already made their minds up beforehand only leads to unconstructive debates and arguments.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 145:

“…Nor will you be a follower of their qiblah…”

This part of the verse, also warns muslims not to compromise on the teachings of Islam in order to please other societies. There is a big difference between treating other societies with respect, something which Islam commands, and compromising on one’s faith in order to please people from other societies.

It also indicates the importance of strictly adhering to the code of conduct outlined in the two sources of guidance, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All other sources of religious knowledge must be avoided, even if they lead to good actions, as the more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 145:

"…Nor would they be followers of one another's qiblah…"

In addition, this part of the verse also highlights that the two members of the people of the book, the Jews and Christians, will never truly be united, even if it does not appear that way to the rest of the world. This is because any relationship they form between each other will always be based on worldly gain, such as wealth and power. As worldly things are fickle by nature, all the bonds based on worldly things eventually break with the passing of time and changing of circumstances. This is quite evident in history, when strong allies eventually became enemies as the worldly bond of friendship between them broke with the passing of time and with the changes of circumstances. Muslims must therefore avoid this attitude and instead follow in the footsteps of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who remained united as they bonds were based on faith, not worldly things. A muslim must

prioritize the bond of faith with other muslims over all other bonds, even family bonds, as this will lead to unity amongst them, as they all have a common goal, to please Allah, the Exalted, by acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. When a group has a common goal, they will remain united through every situation.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates a profound specific and general truth. As the people of the book only followed their desires, as they cherry picked what divine teachings to follow, which ones to edit and which ones to ignore, their faith was based on nothing except worshipping their own desires. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 145:

"…So if you were to follow their desires…"

Allah, the Exalted, did not warn against following their religion or faith, instead He indicated the truth of their faith and way of life, that it was based on nothing except worshipping their own desires. Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that there are only two paths and ways of life in this world. The correct path and way of life involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This paths leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The second path is the path of worshipping one's own desires. This path can take many forms but the essence of these forms is one in the same. It can take the form of cherry picking from the teachings of one's religion, obeying and following social media, fashion, culture and other people. The essence of all of these is satisfying one's own desires and the desires of others. This path leads to misery, difficulties and trouble in both worlds, even if one experiences moments of fun and entertainment and even if they possess the entire world, as no one can escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you,

and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

These two paths have been summarised at the end of verse 145. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 145:

"…*So if you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, indeed, you would then be among the wrongdoers."*

It is up to each person to observe history and the people around them in order to understand the truthfulness of this discussion and then decide which path they should choose for themself, as no one will escape facing the consequences of their choice and actions.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 146-147

ٱلَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَٰهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ يَعْرِفُونَهُۥ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَآءَهُمْ ۖ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ ٱلْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

ٱلْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۖ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him as they know their own sons. But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].

The truth is from your Lord, so never be among the doubters.”

The first part of these verses can be interpreted to mean different things. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him as they know their own sons…”

The pronoun him could be referring to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This indicates that the truthfulness of Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was known to the scholars from the people of the book as he had been discussed in their divine scriptures. For example, some of the qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which were recorded in the Torah have been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2125. These qualities had been concealed and edited by some of the scholars from the people of the book. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“…*But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].”*

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him as they know their own sons…”

The pronoun him could also mean it, which means it could be referring to the Holy Quran. The scholars from the people of the book recognized the Holy Quran as they were familiar with its Author, Allah, the Exalted. A person who is familiar with a particular author easily recognizes their work. In addition, the Holy Quran was also discussed in the previous divine scriptures. But again, this knowledge has been concealed and edited by some scholars from the people of the book. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"…*But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it]."*

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him as they know their own sons…"

As the previous verses discussed the changing of the focal point and how this truth was known to the people of the book, the pronoun he, which can mean it, could also be referring to the final focal point of the muslims, which is the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Masjid Al Haraam, in Mecca. But again, this knowledge has been concealed and edited by some scholars from the people of the book. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"…*But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].*"

In each case, the main reason why the scholars from the people of the book rejected Islam is that it challenged their way of life. They had the habit of using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to themselves and Islam challenged this and commanded people to use them correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, the coming of Islam would have destroyed their high social status they had obtained within their society. Furthermore, as the faith of the people of the book, particularly the Jews, was centered around lineage they could not accept and follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he belonged to a different lineage than them. If they accepted and followed him it would have destroyed their false claim of being superior to the rest of mankind because of their lineage. This they could not accept. Muslims must avoid this attitude of ignoring those parts of Islamic teachings which contradict their desires. A muslim must accept and act on all the teachings of Islam according to their potential knowing it is best for them even if they fail to understand the wisdom behind them. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor, knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will obtain peace of mind and body, so will the muslim who sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even if this conduct contradicts their desires. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But the one who knowingly cherry picks what Islamic teachings to follow and which ones to ignore, will misuse the worldly blessings they have been granted. This will lead to stress, misery and difficulties for them in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"…*But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it]."*

Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"…*But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it]."*

Generally speaking, a muslim must avoid this attitude of concealing useful knowledge from others as it can lead to trouble in both worlds. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2649, that whoever conceals knowledge without a valid reason will be bridled with fire on the Day of Judgement. Therefore, muslims must share the useful knowledge they gain with others. It is simply foolish not to, as this is one of the righteous deeds which will benefit a muslim even after they die. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 241. It is a fact that those who hoarded knowledge were forgotten by history but those who shared it with others were recorded as the scholars and teachers of mankind.

A muslim must not only share useful knowledge but always act on the truth at all times. They must adopt truthfulness in their intention, by only acting in order to please Allah, the Exalted. They must adopt truthfulness in their speech, so that they only speak what is good and truthful or remain silent. And they must adopt truthfulness in their actions by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner will be recorded by Allah, the Exalted, as a truthful person. Whereas, the one who adopts falsehood in their intention, speech and actions will be recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1971. It does not take a scholar to determine what will happen to the person who has been recorded as a great liar by Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"…*But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it]."*

This can also occur when one possesses knowledge but fails to act on it. It is vital to understand that Islamic and worldly knowledge is only useful when one acts on it, otherwise it has very little value in the sight of Islam. Just like possessing the knowledge of a path to safety will not benefit someone until they actually journey down the path and reach safety, neither will Islamic knowledge lead to peace of mind and success in both worlds when it is not acted upon.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"…*But indeed, a party of them conceal the truth while they know [it].*"

This verse also makes it clear that not all the people of the book behaved in this manner. Many of them did sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in divine teachings. This indicates the importance of not judging an entire group based on the actions of some members of that group, as this often leads to discrimination, such as racism.

Allah, the Exalted, then warns muslims through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, not to fall into doubt over the truthfulness of Islam because of the actions of others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 147:

"The truth is from your Lord, so never be among the doubters."

Generally speaking, it is common sense for a non-muslim and a duty of a muslim to avoid judging Islam and its teachings based on the actions of other people. Instead, a person must approach the teachings of Islam, and any worldly matter, with an open mind and research the topic through an authentic source in order to determine for themself if it is the truth or not.

Sadly, many ignorant muslims observe other muslims who supposedly possess knowledge misbehaving and assume Islam teaches this type of conduct, when it does not. Allah, the Exalted, will never accept the excuse of a muslim who avoids acting on Islamic teachings as they had been put off from doing so by other people who misrepresented Islam. Each person is responsible to use the common sense they have been granted in order to search and identify the truth for themself.

In addition, a muslim must avoid misrepresenting Islam to other people so that they avoid putting them off from learning about Islam. Each muslim is a representative of Allah, the Exalted, on Earth and will therefore be held responsible for this duty. This duty can only be fulfilled when one changes their character according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that others can recognize the truthfulness of Islam through their conduct.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 147:

"The truth is from your Lord, so never be among the doubters."

People, such as relatives and friends, can often cause a muslim to fall into doubt whether to learn and act on the teachings of Islam. A muslim must always choose their companions wisely as they will be influenced by them, either positively or negatively. Due to ignorance, a relative or friend can put

off others from studying Islamic teachings while they believe they are sincerely advising their companion. In order to avoid this and to overcome weakness of faith generally, a muslim must learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they obtain certainty of faith. Through knowledge, a muslim will be able to differentiate bad companionship from good companionship, and bad advice from good advice. In addition, certainty of faith will prevent them from doubting the choices and advice of Allah, the Exalted, especially when they face difficulties. Instead, certainty of faith will encourage them to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through every situation. In times of ease, they will show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in Islamic teachings. And in times of difficulties, they will remain patient knowing Allah, the Exalted, only chooses what is best. Patience involves avoiding complaining with one's actions or speech and remaining firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, through certainty of faith, one will obtain reward and peace of mind in every situation they face. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. It is important to note that certainty of faith is rooted in Islamic knowledge, it is not achieved through habit, such as offering the five daily obligatory prayers over many years.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 147:

"The truth is from your Lord, so never be among the doubters."

The expressions in the Holy Quran are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a straight forward way. Its words and verses are extremely eloquent and no other book can surpass it. The Holy Quran mentions the history of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commands every good and forbids every evil. Those which affect an individual and those which affect the entire society, so that justice, security and peace spreads throughout every home and community. The Holy Quran avoids exaggerations, lies or any falsehood, unlike poetry, stories and fables. All the verses are beneficial and can be applied practically to one's life. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran, different important lessons are highlighted. Unlike all other books, the Holy Quran does not bore a person when it is repeatedly studied. The Holy Quran provides promises and warnings and supports them with undeniable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses something which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides a simple and practical way of implementing it into one's life. It encourages people to fulfil the purpose of their creation, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, thereby ensuring they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. It makes the straight path obvious and appealing to the one who desires peace of mind and real success in both worlds. The knowledge of the Holy Quran is timeless as it can be applied to every society and age. It is a cure for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It provides the solution for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever face. One only needs to observe history and how the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly benefited from its all-encompassing and timeless teachings. Centuries have passed yet not a single letter has been changed in the Holy Quran, as Allah, the Exalted, promised to preserve it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

Allah, the Exalted, discussed the root problems found within a community and detailed the practical remedy for all of them. By correcting root problems, the countless branch problems which stem from them would automatically be corrected. This is how the Holy Quran addressed all the things a person and society need to succeed in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 89:

“…And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things…”

This is the greatest timeless miracle Allah, the Exalted, bestowed upon His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But only those who seek and act on the truth will benefit from it whereas those who seek their desires and cherry pick from it will only encounter loss in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 148-150

وَلِكُلّٖ وِجۡهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّيهَاۖ فَٱسۡتَبِقُواْ ٱلۡخَيۡرَٰتِۚ أَيۡنَ مَا تَكُونُواْ يَأۡتِ بِكُمُ ٱللَّهُ جَمِيعًاۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ قَدِيرٞ ١٤٨

وَمِنۡ حَيۡثُ خَرَجۡتَ فَوَلِّ وَجۡهَكَ شَطۡرَ ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡحَرَامِۖ وَإِنَّهُۥ لَلۡحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَۗ وَمَا ٱللَّهُ
بِغَٰفِلٍ عَمَّا تَعۡمَلُونَ ١٤٩

وَمِنۡ حَيۡثُ خَرَجۡتَ فَوَلِّ وَجۡهَكَ شَطۡرَ ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡحَرَامِۚ وَحَيۡثُ مَا كُنتُمۡ فَوَلُّواْ وُجُوهَكُمۡ
شَطۡرَهُۥ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيۡكُمۡ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُواْ مِنۡهُمۡ فَلَا تَخۡشَوۡهُمۡ وَٱخۡشَوۡنِي
وَلِأُتِمَّ نِعۡمَتِي عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَلَعَلَّكُمۡ تَهۡتَدُونَ ١٥٠

“For everyone is a direction toward which they face. So race to [all that is] good. Wherever you may be, Allah will bring you forth [for judgement] all together. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent.

So from wherever you go out [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram [for the prayer], and indeed, it is the truth from your Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

And from wherever you go out [for prayer], turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. And wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces toward it in order that the people will not have any argument against you, except for those of them who commit wrong; so fear them not but fear Me. And [it is] so I may complete My favor upon you and that you may be guided.”

Everyone, irrespective of their beliefs, has a direction in which they face, meaning, a particular path of life they have chosen. Some have chosen to face and dedicate themselves to worldly things, such as obtaining fame, fortune, authority, family or friends. Even though each person's direction varies from others, none the less, they are all searching for the same thing, peace of mind. Each person faces a particular direction and chooses a particular path in life as they genuinely believe that it will lead them to peace of mind. That has always been the ultimate goal behind every aim and objective in this world. For example, people dedicate themselves to obtaining wealth as they believe possessing it will lead to peace of mind. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 148:

"For everyone is a direction toward which they face…"

But as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the universe, and particularly the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone determines who obtains peace of mind. He therefore advises people to face the direction that benefits them in both worlds, meaning, to dedicate their resources to things which lead to peace of mind in both worlds. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 148:

"…*So race to [all that is] good…"*

As this good has been left common and has not been specified, it indicates that every single person, irrespective of their social status or the worldly things they have been granted, can achieve this good which leads to peace of mind in both worlds. No one is excluded from this opportunity, as it does not depend on possessing many worldly things, such as wealth. It simply involves using whatever blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Whichever path one chooses to face and dedicate their resources too, whether this direction is towards worldly things or this direction is towards the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, they will face the consequences of their choice in both worlds, as nothing can escape the control and authority of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 148:

"…Wherever you may be, Allāh will bring you forth [for judgement] all together. Indeed, Allāh is over all things competent."

The one who chooses to face and direct their efforts and resources to worldly things will inevitably misuse the blessings they have been granted. As a result, they will obtain misery, difficulties and stress in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment. This is quite evident when one observes the rich and famous. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whereas, the one who faces the direction which pleases Allah, the Exalted, by correcting their intention, speech and actions so that they dedicate the resources they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings, will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

One must therefore accept and act on Islamic teachings knowing it is best for them in both worlds and behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the advice of their medica doctor knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 148:

“For everyone is a direction toward which they face. So race to [all that is] good…”

Behind every direction and struggle in life lies an intention. This therefore indicates the importance of correcting one’s intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted, as this intention alone is the source of all good in both worlds. It is vital to understand that the inward foundation of Islam is one’s intention. If this inward foundation is corrupt, then everything that comes from it will be corrupt. The one who acts for other reasons will be told to on Judgement Day to obtain their reward from the things and people they acted to please, which in reality is not possible to do. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A good sign of adopting the correct intention is when one does not expect nor hope for any payback or gratitude from people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 148:

“For everyone is a direction toward which they face. So race to [all that is] good…”

Specifically, the good mentioned in this verse refers to the obligatory prayers. This indicates that the essence of one's good actions are the obligatory prayers. Without them obtaining peace of mind and success in both worlds is generally not possible. The fact that Allah, the Exalted, discusses faith and the obligatory prayers interchangeably in the Holy Quran is enough to indicate their importance as well as the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2618, that the difference between belief and disbelief is abandoning the obligatory prayers. It is vital to understand that faith is like a plant which must be nourished with good actions, the most important of them being the obligatory prayers. Just like a plant which fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, will die, so well may the faith of a muslim who fails to nourish their faith with actions, such as the obligatory prayers. This is the greatest loss. Chapter 74 Al Muddaththir, verses 42-43:

"[And asking them], "What put you into Saqar?" They will say, "We were not of those who prayed.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 148:

"…So race to [all that is] good…"

Hastening to good actions has been commanded in this verse, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, as people's time in this world is extremely limited. Chapter 46 Al Ahqaf, verse 35:

"…on the Day they see that which they are promised - as though they had not remained [in the world] except an hour of a day…"

Therefore, muslims must avoid one of the greatest traps of the Devil, meaning, procrastination of doing good deeds. As one's lifespan in this world is unknown, it is vital for every muslim to use every opportunity and resource they have been granted correctly so that they benefit from it in both worlds through peace of mind. They must not delay learning, understanding and acting on Islamic teachings to a later date, as they may well not reach that future date. And this delay will only encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which only leads to stress, difficulties and trouble in both worlds.

After indicating the general direction of life a person faces, Allah, the Exalted, then discusses a particular direction, the focal point of the muslims during prayer. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 149:

“*So from wherever you go out [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Haram [for the prayer], and indeed, it is the truth from your Lord…”*

This particular direction, which muslims face at least five times a day, is therefore meant to remind them of the general direction they face during their day to day activities. This is one of the major benefits of having the five daily obligatory prayers spread out during the day. Whenever one becomes distracted by worldly things and begins to face and dedicate their resources to them, the next obligatory prayer, during which they face the House of Allah, the Exalted, Masjid Al Haraam, is meant to readjust their behaviour so that they face the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in all their day to day activities. The one who fails to understand this purpose of the obligatory prayers may offer their prayers but they will fail to face the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in between their prayers during their day to day activities. This attitude will only encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn prevents them from obtaining peace of mind, despite the fact they offer their obligatory prayers. A muslim must therefore pay particular attention to their day to day activities in between their obligatory prayers to ensure they are constantly facing the correct direction in life, as Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of all the things they do and will therefore hold them accountable in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 149:

“…And Allāh is not unaware of what you do.”

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights the importance of solely following in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

as this is the only path that leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 150:

“*And from wherever you [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him] go out [for prayer], turn your face toward al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. And wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces toward it…”*

And chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...""

This indicates that one can only face the correct direction in life, in their day to day activities, when it matches the direction faced by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This indicates the importance of strictly adhering to the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and avoiding acting on other sources of religious knowledge, even if they lead to good actions. The more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith

found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates that whenever a muslim attempts to face the direction that pleases Him in all their day to day activities, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they will face criticism from others who do not face the same direction. This criticism often comes from one's relatives, the people one would expect to receive support from. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 150:

"…And wherever you [believers] may be, turn your faces toward it in order that the people will not have any argument against you, except for those of them who commit wrong…"

Specifically, the people of the book criticized the changing of the focal point and used it as evidence that Islam was not from Allah, the Exalted, otherwise the muslims would have chosen the final focal point from day one. But this was a foolish attitude, as the changing of the focal point was simply a test to make evident who would turn in any direction they were told to by Allah, the Exalted, specifically in respect to the changing of the focal point or generally in any aspect of one's life, and who would disobey Allah, the Exalted, as the new direction challenged their desires. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 143:

“…And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face except that We might make evident who would follow the Messenger from who would turn back on his heels. And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allāh has guided…”

In all cases, a muslim must always turn in whatever direction they are turned towards by Islamic teachings irrespective of the criticism they receive. As indicated by verse 150, a muslim must bear in mind that pleasing people will not save them from the consequences of disobeying Allah, the Exalted, but their obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will protect them from the negative consequences of displeasing people, even if this protection is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 150:

“…so fear them not but fear Me…”

And chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

“…And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out.”

This exit from the criticism and difficulties caused by people applies to every situation without limit. The one who adheres to the attitude of constantly facing the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, in all situations by using the

blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will obtain one of the greatest favours of Allah, the Exalted, in this world and the next namely, right guidance through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 150:

“…And [it is] so I may complete My favor upon you and that you may be guided.”

Whereas, the one who acts in order to please people and avoid their unconstructive criticism will inevitably not please people, as people are fickle in nature and they will displease Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted. This attitude will only cause them to be deprived of right guidance and therefore deprived of peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 150:

"…And [it is] so I may complete My favor upon you and that you may be guided."

An aspect of this favour of appointing a new and different focal point then the people of the book involved being appointed as the new representatives of Allah, the Exalted, and His religion. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh…"

A muslim agreed to representing Allah, the Exalted, when they accepted Islam as their faith and therefore will be left with no excuses if they fail to represent Him correctly. This is only achieved when one learns and adopts the positive characteristics discussed in Islamic teachings, such as generosity, honesty and sincerity and abandons the negative characteristics discussed therein, such as envy, greed and pride. This will ensure that other muslims and non-muslims appreciate the truthfulness of Islam through their conduct. But if a muslim fails to behave in this manner and instead adopts the wrong character, then they will misrepresent Islam to the world. They will undoubtedly face the consequences of this failure in both worlds.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 151-152

كَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا فِيكُمۡ رَسُولٗا مِّنكُمۡ يَتۡلُواْ عَلَيۡكُمۡ ءَايَٰتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمۡ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ
ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمۡ تَكُونُواْ تَعۡلَمُونَ ١٥١

فَٱذۡكُرُونِيٓ أَذۡكُرۡكُمۡ وَٱشۡكُرُواْ لِي وَلَا تَكۡفُرُونِ ١٥٢

“Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and wisdom and teaching you that which you did not know.

So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”

Allah, the Exalted, reminds the non-muslims of Mecca of the important fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, spent 40 years amongst them prior to the announcement of Prophethood and was therefore not a stranger to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 151:

“Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves…”

The fact they referred to him as the trustworthy and honest one within their society and always praised his unparalleled character was enough of a reason for them to accept his message. In fact, during his childhood the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was always under the protection of Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, saved him from the evils that where widespread during the age of ignorance: the time before Islam. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, reached maturity, he was the finest person among his people, the best of them in character and repute, the best of neighbours, the most prudent, the most honest in speech and most trustworthy. He was completely removed from all evil characteristics. Because of this, he became known among the people of Mecca as the trustworthy and the truthful one. This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, The Life of the Prophet, Volume 1, Page 180. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

“…for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"

Yet, many of the non-muslims of Mecca rejected the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which they clearly recognized, out of fear of losing their social position within their society and out of fear of being prevented from misusing the blessings they had been granted. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 78:

“We had certainly brought you the truth, but most of you, to the truth, were averse.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 151:

“Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves…”

This could also be referring to the fact that the people of the book recognized the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran as they had both been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

This should have been enough of a reason for them to accept Islam yet many of them rejected it out of fear of losing their social position within society and out of fear of being prevented from misusing the blessings they had been granted by Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates the purpose behind sending a Holy Prophet, peace be upon them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 151:

“*Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves reciting to you Our verses and purifying you…”*

The process of purifying one’s intention, so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted, purifying one’s speech, so that they only speak what is good or remain silent and purifying one’s actions, so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted,

as outlined in Islamic teachings, is only possible when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings. Simply listening to the recitation of the Holy Quran in a language one does not understand will not lead to this purification. Only when one purifies their mind and body in this way will they achieve peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 151:

"…reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book…"

The book could be referring to the law and code of conduct which every member of society needs to act upon in order to cause peace of mind and justice to spread throughout society. The issue with man-made laws and codes of conduct is that they will always be biased by favoring one group of people over another. For example, the rich are favored over the poor members of society. An aspect of correctly implementing the divine code of conduct is referred to as wisdom in verse 151. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 151:

“…reciting to you Our verses and purifying you and teaching you the Book and wisdom…”

Wisdom teaches a person how to use the knowledge they possess correctly so that they benefit themself and others in both worlds. Wisdom is vital as any knowledge or code of conduct can be manipulated for evil purposes. For example, science can be used correctly in order to benefit others, such as producing medicines, or it can be misused to harm people, such as producing weapons. This wisdom can take the shape of good morals and characteristics, such as generosity, patience and gratitude, so that one is urged by them to apply the code of conduct they have been granted correctly within their lives.

In addition, as indicated by verse 151, as people’s knowledge is extremely limited when it comes to the mental and physical state of humans as well as dealing with issues within society, the only one who can provide a complete code of conduct which is perfectly designed for the nature of humans and corrects all types of issues within society in order to achieve the best results, is the One who knows all things, namely, Allah, the Exalted. One only needs to turn the pages of history to observe how justice and peace spread within the societies that correctly implemented the code of conduct granted to them by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 151:

“…and teaching you that which you did not know.”

When one adopts the correct attitude discussed, which can be summarized to involve their intention, speech and actions so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, then they would have fulfilled the conditions of remembering Allah, the Exalted, and showing gratitude to Him in a way which leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me…”

And chapter 13 Ar Ra’d, verse 28:

“…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

Whereas, the one who fails to remember and show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, in this way, will find that the very worldly things they possess will become a source of stress and trouble for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“So remember Me; I will remember you. And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”

It is important to note that belief has been paired up with gratitude and disbelief has been paired up with ingratitude. This often occurs within Islamic teachings. This indicates the importance of understanding that a person cannot be a true believer until they adopt gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, gratitude is the first step towards real belief in Allah, the Exalted. This further highlights the importance of supporting one’s verbal declaration of belief with actions, as gratitude cannot be shown without actions, which would mean, belief cannot be obtained without good actions. To summarise, gratitude in one’s intention involves only acting in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Gratitude in one’s speech involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. And gratitude in one’s actions involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 152:

“…And be grateful to Me and do not deny Me.”

In addition, it is important to note that showing gratitude to people is a part of showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, as Allah, the Exalted, often uses people to delivery certain blessings to other people, such as one’s parents. One must therefore show gratitude to people by repaying them for their favour, even if it is just with a supplication of wellbeing on their behalf, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in

a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, that the one who does not show gratitude to people cannot show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted.

To conclude, just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor knowing it is best for their mental and physical wellbeing, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan, a muslim must strive to remember Allah, the Exalted, and show gratitude to Him so that they obtain a healthy mental and physical state in both worlds even if this behaviour may, at times, contradict their worldly desires.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 153-157

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱسْتَعِينُوا۟ بِٱلصَّبْرِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

وَلَا تَقُولُوا۟ لِمَن يُقْتَلُ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ أَمْوَٰتٌۢ ۚ بَلْ أَحْيَآءٌ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُم بِشَىْءٍ مِّنَ ٱلْخَوْفِ وَٱلْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ ٱلْأَمْوَٰلِ وَٱلْأَنفُسِ وَٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ
ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَآ أَصَٰبَتْهُم مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّآ إِلَيْهِ رَٰجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَٰتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

"O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.

And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allah, "They are dead." Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.

And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient.

Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."

Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided."

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 153:

"*O you who have believed, seek help through patience…"*

Patience is when one avoids complaining about their difficulty through their actions or speech and maintains their sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, throughout their ordeal. This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The root of becoming patient is learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. The more one learns and acts on Islamic knowledge, the more they will understand that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best for everyone involved, even if this is not obvious to them, as the difficulties they face have wisdoms behind them which are hidden from them. For example, there are many such events discussed within Islamic teachings, such as the story of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, who was separated from his parents at a young age by his brothers, abandoned in a dark and deep well, sold as a child slave and wrongfully thrown into prison. But each of these events allowed him to learn certain lessons which prepared him for saving the population of Egypt from a huge famine. If he did not endure the difficulties he faced he would not have been in a position to save millions of lives. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Believing in these wisdoms and therefore, maintaining one’s obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is therefore a part of one’s faith. It is easy to believe in Allah, the Exalted, and praise Him during times of ease but the real test is when one faces difficulties and still obeys and praises Him.

Studying Islamic teachings also helps one to compare their difficulties to other people, who were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, and endured greater difficulties. This comparison helps one to belittle their own difficulty which in turn aids them in remaining patient. This can also be achieved when one observes other people within their time period who are facing greater difficulties than them.

Islamic teachings also allows one to understand the importance of destiny and how every event they will face in their life, whether times of ease or difficulties, is inevitable. Complaining about something inevitable and inescapable will not result in any good. A person will only lose out on the countless reward they could obtain by remaining patient on the inescapable difficulty they are destined to face. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“…the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

A person therefore has a choice between facing an inescapable event with patience and gain an uncountable reward or facing an inescapable event with impatience and lose the reward they should have obtained. Either way they will face the inescapable event, so it makes sense to gain benefit from it in both worlds. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allāh, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you…”

Studying Islamic teachings also causes one to understand that the things they desire in this world are not necessarily best for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Each person has many examples within their life of this truth. There are plenty of things a person desires believing it is best for them, only for those things to become a source of stress for them. And there are plenty of things a person dislikes believing it is bad for them, only for those things to become a source of goodness for them. The one who understands this will be less impatient when dealing with situations which contradict their desires, as they

understand facing the situation is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them.

In addition, just like gold is purified through heat, similarly, people obtain mental strength through facing difficulties. Those who are accustomed to an easy life, often experience mental breakdowns when facing standard and even small difficulties, such as marriage problems. Through tests, Allah, the Exalted, toughens the mental state of a muslim so that they face future difficulties with ease.

As taught by Islam, patience is required in all situations, even times of ease. In times of ease, a person must adopt patience in order to prevent themself from misusing the blessing they have been granted, such as good health or a rise in their salary.

There are many more wisdoms behind facing difficulties in this world which have been discussed within Islamic teachings. Therefore, it is vital for muslims to study, learn and act on them so that they adopt patience in every situation so that they obtain a countless reward in both worlds. A person must remain patient through every situation, just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

Patience does not mean a person becomes inactive. An aspect of patience is dealing with the situation and attempting to correct it according to the teachings of Islam. For example, a wife who is being abused by her husband should take steps to protect herself and her children, such as separating from her husband. Behaving in this manner does not contradict patience while becoming inactive has nothing to do with patience or Islam. Similarly, showing emotions, such as crying, does not contradict patience in anyway as the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, cried so much over his grief that he became blind and yet he was never criticised by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 84:

“And he turned away from them and said, "Oh, my sorrow over Joseph," and his eyes became white from grief, for he was [of that] a suppressor.”

There are many examples when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, wept over a sad situation, such as the death of his son, Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126. Showing disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, through one’s speech and actions contradicts patience, anything other than this is acceptable and part of human nature, such as crying and feel sad.

It is important to note that patience must be shown from the onset of a difficulty until one leaves this world. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302. Showing patience after some time has passed is not real patience, it is merely acceptance which naturally occurs with everyone. A muslim must maintain patience from the onset of a difficulty

by controlling their speech and actions so that they do not show signs of impatience and maintain this attitude until they depart from this world, as one can easily lose the reward of patience by showing impatience down the line.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 153:

“O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer…”

Help is sought through the prayer as it is a means of attracting the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. The mercy of Allah, the Exalted, naturally displaces difficulties and strengthens a muslim so that they remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all situations.

In addition, when it is established correctly, the prayer is a constant reminder of Judgement Day. Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling them with their full conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. Establishing the obligatory prayers is often repeated in the Holy Quran as it is the most important practical proof of one’s faith in Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as the daily prayers are all spread out, they act as a constant reminder of the Day of Judgement and practically preparing for it, as each stage of the obligatory prayer is connected to Judgement Day. When one stands up right, this is how they will stand in front of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verses 4-6:

“Do they not think that they will be resurrected. For a tremendous Day The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?”

When they bow, it reminds them of the many people who will be criticized on Judgement Day for not bowing to Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. Chapter 77 Al Mursalat, verse 48:

“And when it is said to them, "Bow [in prayer]," they do not bow.”

This criticism also includes not practically submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of one’s life. When one prostrates in the prayer, it reminds them of how people will be invited to prostrate to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. But those who did not prostrate correctly to Him during their lives on Earth, which involves obeying Him in all aspects of their lives, will not be able to do this on Judgement Day. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verses 42-43:

"On the Day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so. Their eyes humbled, humiliation will cover them. And they used to be invited to prostration while they were sound.”

When one sits on their knees in the prayer, it reminds them of how they will be sitting in this position in front of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement, fearing their final judgement. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 28:

"And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do.""

The one who prays with these elements in mind will establish their prayers correctly. This in turn will ensure they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in between the prayers. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

"…Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing…"

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Therefore, establishing the prayers aids one to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to divine mercy and mental strength to

successfully deal with any problem they may face, as Allah, the Exalted, has promised a safe exit from any situation when one remains firm on His obedience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

"…And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out"

In addition, as the prayers remind one of Judgement Day, the horrors and difficulties of which surpass the difficulties of this world, this reminder will therefore aid them to belittle the difficulty they are facing, as all worldly difficulties are insignificant compared to the difficulties of Judgement Day. The more one belittles the difficulties they face in this world, the more they will face them with patience.

The one who encompasses patience and establishing the prayers will be blessed with the divine proximity of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 153:

"…seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allāh is with the patient."

The one who obtains the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if they face difficulties along the way.

Just like a person cannot understand all the wisdoms behind the tests and difficulties they face in this world, similarly, they cannot fathom the reward and blessings of those who dedicate their life and worldly blessings to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 154:

“And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allāh, "They are dead." Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.”

To achieve this great rank, one must adopt mental strength through patience and establishing the prayers, as dedicating one’s life and blessings in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, is a difficult task, as the Devil, one’s inner devil and the material world are constantly inviting a person towards misusing the blessings they have been granted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 153-154:

“…seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allāh is with the patient. And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allāh, "They are dead." Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.”

Generally speaking, this indicates that the one who dedicates their life and resources in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, is the only one who is truly alive in this world and in the next. Whereas, the one who misuses the

blessings they have been granted, is dead in both worlds, even if they are biologically alive. This is because they have failed to fulfil the purpose of their creation and there is no real difference between the living and the dead in respect to the person who fails to fulfil the purpose of their creation. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship [obey] Me."

This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6407, that the difference between the living and the dead is the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, the one who remembers Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is alive, even after they die. This is obvious when one turns the pages of history. Those who behaved in this manner, such as the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were remembered positively while they were alive and are remembered after their passing. Their teachings and lives are studied in a way which gives the impression they are still alive amongst the people. Whereas, the one who forgets Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted is dead, even when they are alive. This is also obvious when one observes the rich and famous, who despite having worldly things lead a depressed and sad life, a life which appears full of life while internally it is empty, like a vase. This is not living at all. And after they die, they are hardly remembered by the world in a positive way and become footnotes in history while their fans move onto the next celebrity to follow blindly. And if the deceased ends up in Hell, then they will be left in oblivion, neither living nor dying. Chapter 20 Taha, verse 74:

“Indeed, whoever comes to his Lord as a criminal - indeed, for him is Hell; he will neither die therein nor live.”

Therefore, the person who desires to truly live in both worlds must fulfil the purpose of their creation by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 154:

“And do not say about those who are killed in the way of Allāh, "They are dead." Rather, they are alive, but you perceive [it] not.”

Generally speaking, the start of verse 154 indicates the importance of keeping good control over one’s speech. Speech can be split into three categories. The first is evil speech which must be avoided at all costs. The second is good speech which should be spoken at the appropriate time. The final category of speech is vain speech. This type of speech is not considered a sin or a good deed but as this type leads to evil speech it is best to avoid it also. In addition, vain speech will be a source of regret for a person on Judgement Day when they observe the opportunities and time they wasted on vain speech. Therefore, a muslim must either speak what is good or remain silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 176.

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds people of the purpose of this world and the test of life in this world. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 155:

“And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits…”

The test of life is simple: Allah, the Exalted, has granted certain blessings to a person and has commanded them to use the blessings correctly so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. In order for this test to be complete and fair, a person must behave in this manner through both times of ease and difficulties. As Allah, the Exalted, has complete and sole control of the universe and the events a person faces, questioning and challenging this test of life will not aid them in this world or in the next. Instead, one must accept the way Allah, the Exalted, created life in this world and strive to pass their test in this world, just like a wise student accepts they must experience and endure school, academic assignments, homework and exams in order to achieve success in this world, even though the vast majority of students dislike studying. Similarly, the vast majority of people would not work a job in this world if they could find a way to sustain themselves without it. But as this is not possible, in most cases, the vast majority of people must work in order to sustain themselves and their dependents. These are worldly realities everyone accepts, irrespective of their faith. Similarly, a person must accept the reality of the test of life in this world, even if it does not make sense to them, as facing it is inevitable.

As mentioned earlier, those who seek mental strength through patience and establishing their prayers will be granted the company of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 153:

"O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient."

The company of Allah, the Exalted, leads to divine mercy in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 155:

"…but give good tidings to the patient."

This good news reminds a muslim that the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is with them and it will strengthen them so that they can journey through every situation successfully. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds, even during difficult times, just like the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was granted peace of mind when he was thrown into a great fire. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 68-69:

“They said, "Burn him and support your gods - if you are to act." We [i.e., Allāh] said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham.""

It is these patient people who recognize the innate truth that every situation they face was inescapable and unavoidable, just like an arrow which strikes its intended victim. This meaning is derived from the Arabic word used in verse 156. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

“Who, when disaster strikes them…”

They understand that as they cannot escape destiny it makes sense to earn reward from situations they face by adopting patience, rather than losing countless reward by showing impatience. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allāh, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you…”

The one who accepts their destiny and understands that Allah, the Exalted, chooses what is best for them, even if they fail to recognise the wisdoms

behind His choices, will be guided to patience. Chapter 64 At Taghabun, verse 11:

“No disaster strikes except by permission of Allāh. And whoever believes in Allāh - He will guide his heart…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

It is these patient people who recognize that they, and whatever they possess in this world, were created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, therefore, He chooses when these blessings are granted and when they are recalled to Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

“…say, "Indeed we belong to Allah…””

The same way a person has no right to question or complain when an organization or a person takes back anything they have granted someone else on a loan, such as money, neither does a person have a right to complain against Allah, the Exalted, when He takes back anything they were granted in this world, as everything they have been granted, even their own life, is simply a loan granted by Allah, the Exalted. This is why a person must use all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is how one repays the blessings they have been loaned. Whereas, the blessings in Paradise are a gift which a person inherits and they will therefore be free to use them as they please. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 43:

"…And they will be called, "This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do.""

These patient people constantly remember their return to Allah, the Exalted, and being held accountable for all their actions, including the times they remained patient through difficulties. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

"…and indeed to Him we will return."

Remembering one's accountability on Judgement Day has always been an excellent tool to encourage one to maintain patience through times of difficulties, by avoiding complaining through one's speech or actions and

maintaining their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. And an excellent tool to maintain gratitude through times of ease, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, as mentioned earlier, remembering one's accountability on Judgement Day is an excellent way of belittling any difficulty one faces in this world, as all worldly difficulties fade into insignificance compared to the horrors and difficulties of Judgement Day. This attitude will further encourage one to maintain patience. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 156:

"…and indeed to Him we will return."

Those who gain the mental strength through patience and establishing their prayers so that they maintain their sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through every situation, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will achieve right guidance through every situation they face so that they enter and exit them with peace of mind. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 157:

"Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who abandons patience and fails to establish their prayers will not obtain the mental strength to remain sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, through every situation. This will only cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn leads to stress, misery and trouble in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 158

۞ إِنَّ ٱلصَّفَا وَٱلْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَآئِرِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ فَمَنْ حَجَّ ٱلْبَيْتَ أَوِ ٱعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَن يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا ۚ وَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٨﴾

“Indeed, aṣ-Ṣafā and al-Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever makes ḥajj [pilgrimage] to the House or performs ʿumrah [visitation] - there is no blame upon him for walking between them. And whoever volunteers good - then indeed, Allah is Appreciative and Knowing.”

After discussing the importance of patience and some of the different ways Allah, the Exalted, tests people in this world, in order to make evident who sincerely obeys Him in every situation and who does not, Allah, the Exalted, then mentions an example which encompasses the tests mentioned. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 155-157:

“And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allāh, and indeed to Him we will return." Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the [rightly] guided.”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 158:

“Indeed, aṣ-Ṣafā and al-Marwah are among the symbols of Allāh…”

The origin story behind the two famous mountains in Mecca, Mount Safa and Mount Marwah involves the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, being commanded to leave his wife, Haajara, may Allah be pleased with her, and their infant son, the Holy Prophet Ismaeel, peace be upon him, in a barren desert with no source of provision, which later became Mecca. Haajara, may Allah be pleased with her, accepted the command of Allah, the Exalted, with patience and contentment and endured her test successfully. She ran between the two mountains: Mount Safa and Mount Marwah repeatedly

searching for any signs of water or food for her son. Allah, the Exalted, then caused a miraculous spring to burst forth from the Earth, which still flows to this very day and is called the Zamzam well. Allah, the Exalted, loved her patience and actions so much that He made running between the two mountains a part of the Visitation (Umra) and the Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj). She and her family endured all the tests mentioned in the earlier verses successfully: fear, hunger and a genuine threat to her life and the life of her infant son. This incident has been discussed in detail in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3364.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 158:

"Indeed, aṣ-Ṣafā and al-Marwah are among the symbols of Allāh…"

Generally speaking, a muslim must adopt the perception whereby they observe everything within the creation and the events they face as a sign of Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite power. This constant reminder of Allah, the Exalted, is an excellent way of maintaining one's obedience to Him, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who only remembers Allah, the Exalted, when they are praying or reciting the Holy Quran will easily misuse the blessings they have been granted, as using them correctly requires the constant remembrance of Allah, the Exalted. Misusing the blessings one has been granted only ever leads to stress, misery and trouble in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world and experience times of fun and entertainment. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In respect to the creation, observing the different created bodies within the Heavens and the Earth reminds one of the ultimate and unlimited power of Allah, the Exalted. This reminds a muslim that they cannot escape the control and power of Allah, the Exalted, and must therefore sincerely obey Him at all times. The constant changes within the world, such as the coming and going of the days and nights, should remind one of their mortality and facing their accountability on Judgement Day. This will encourage them to prepare for their final accountability by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This should be the attitude and perception of the muslim who performs the Visitation and the Holy Pilgrimage. Every stage of their journey must remind them of the complete power and control of Allah, the Exalted, and their final accountability on Judgement Day. The one who performs the Visitation and the Holy Pilgrimage in this manner will return a changed person, which is a sign of a successful trip. And the reward for a successful Holy Pilgrimage is nothing but Paradise. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1773. This is because this muslim will return home with the correct perception and attitude, which will encourage them to constantly obey Allah, the Exalted, at all times.

In respect to the events one faces within their life, observing them as inescapable events decreed by Allah, the Exalted, the One who only chooses what is best for everyone involved, even if the wisdoms behind His choices are hidden from people, will allow one to maintain patience throughout every situation. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one’s speech or actions and maintaining their sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. The one who observes the working of Allah, the Exalted, behind every event they face will remember that He is constantly watching and listening to them. This will encourage them to control their speech and actions, especially during times of difficulty.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 158:

“Indeed, aṣ-Ṣafā and al-Marwah are among the symbols of Allāh…”

Generally speaking, muslims are good at showing respect and honour to holy sites and days which are deemed sacred in Islam yet overlook other things, such as the sacredness of people and their possessions. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 67, that the blood, property and honor of a Muslim are sacred in Islam. Therefore, one must strive to show respect and honour to all things which Islam has made sacred, not just holy sites and days. This is best achieved when one treats others in a way they desire to be treated by other people.

The Holy Pilgrimage was performed since the days of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, but over time the practices had become corrupt with polytheism. Some Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, refrained from running between the two mountains of Safa and Marwah out of fear it was a pagan act. Allah, the Exalted, then corrected their thinking and made it clear that running between the two mountains as ordained by Islam was a good deed. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1643. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 158:

“Indeed, aṣ-Ṣafā and al-Marwah are among the symbols of Allāh. So whoever makes ḥajj [pilgrimage] to the House or performs ʿumrah - there is no blame upon him for walking between them…”

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of adhering strictly to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as the original practice of performing the Holy Pilgrimage was only corrupted when divine knowledge was abandoned. A muslim must therefore adhere to the two sources of guidance and leave other sources of religious knowledge, even if they lead to a good deed. The more one follows other sources of religious knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, follows this with a general statement indicating the importance of performing any good deed, irrespective of its size. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 158:

“…*And whoever volunteers good - then indeed, Allah is Appreciative…”*

Allah, the Exalted, does not observe the quantity of a deed but its quality, meaning, the intention behind the good deed. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2342, advises that when one sincerely gives the size of a date fruit in charity from their lawful earnings, Allah, the Exalted, will grant them reward greater than a mountain. One must therefore abandon the excuses which prevent them from doing good deeds and strive to use every opportunity they have been granted to do good, as this leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Good simply refers to using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, no one, irrespective of how little they possess in this world, is excused from performing good deeds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 158:

"…*And whoever volunteers good - then indeed, Allah is Appreciative…"*

This verse also encourages muslims to strive to perform all types of good deeds beyond the obligatory duties, as this is a sign of someone who desires to please Allah, the Exalted. This was the attitude of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who remained steadfast on performing good deeds throughout their lives. In addition, striving beyond the obligatory duties attracts divine love and the one who becomes a beloved of Allah, the Exalted, is guaranteed peace of mind and success in both worlds. In fact, the supplication of this beloved of Allah, the Exalted, will be accepted and they will be granted the protection and refuge of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6502. Simply put, the more good one does, the more they will benefit themself in both worlds. Each person must therefore decide how much they desire to benefit themself in both worlds and work accordingly. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

"O you who have believed, if you support Allāh, He will support you and plant firmly your feet."

Even though the strength, opportunity, ability, inspiration and knowledge to perform a good deed comes from none other than Allah, the Exalted, yet He appreciates the good and sincere efforts of His servants. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 158:

"…*And whoever volunteers good - then indeed, Allah is Appreciative…"*

One must act on this divine attribute, according to their created ability, by showing appreciation to others for the good they do to them. As Allah, the Exalted, has granted countless blessings to each person, one must show gratitude and appreciation to Him at all times. This includes showing gratitude in one's intention, by only acting in order to please Allah, the Exalted. It includes showing gratitude in one's speech, by speaking what is good or remaining silent and it includes showing gratitude in one's actions, by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. The one who encompasses all these aspects of gratitude has been guaranteed an increase in blessings and reward in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

Appreciation must also be shown to other people, such as one's parents, as Allah, the Exalted, often chooses people to deliver certain worldly blessings to other people. Therefore, showing gratitude to others with this intention is part of showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, that whoever does not show gratitude to people will not show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. A person should show gratitude to others by repaying their favors according to their means and ability, even if this only involves a supplication on their behalf.

A muslim must therefore strive to sincerely perform as many good deeds possible, irrespective of their size, and show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, and people, as Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their intention, speech and

actions and will hold them accountable in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 158:

“And whoever volunteers good - then indeed, Allāh is Appreciative and Knowing.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 159-160

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكۡتُمُونَ مَآ أَنزَلۡنَا مِنَ ٱلۡبَيِّنَٰتِ وَٱلۡهُدَىٰ مِنۢ بَعۡدِ مَا بَيَّنَّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ
أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ يَلۡعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَلۡعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّٰعِنُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُواْ وَأَصۡلَحُواْ وَبَيَّنُواْ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَأَنَا ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾

“Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture [the Torah and the Bible] - those are cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse.

Except for those who repent and correct themselves and make evident [what they concealed]. Those - I will accept their repentance, and I am the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.”

Allah, the Exalted, criticizes and warns the scholars from the people of the book to avoid intentionally editing, misinterpreting and concealing the knowledge found within their divine scriptures. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 159:

"*Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture [the Torah and the Bible] - those are cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse."*

They behaved in this manner in order to justify misusing the blessings they had been granted and used their behaviour as a means to obtain wealth, through bribes, and high social position within their societies. In addition, they behaved in this manner in order to prevent others from accepting Islam as they feared losing their social position, as the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, had both been discussed within their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

In addition, they recognized the Holy Quran as they were familiar with its Author, Allah, the Exalted. They intentionally edited, misinterpreted and concealed the knowledge within their divine scriptures which discussed the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as Islam directly challenged their way of life and would prevent them from misusing the blessings they had been granted. In addition, as their faith was deeply rooted in lineage, especially the Jewish faith, they could not accept or follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he was not from their lineage, the children of Israel. Accepting and following him would have destroyed their false claim of being the superior race as they were the descendants of the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. This, they could not accept to do.

As a result of their behaviour, they misguided many others from the truthfulness of Islam and therefore invited the curse and anger of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 159:

“*Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture [the Torah and the Bible] - those are cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse.”*

Generally speaking, this verse warns muslims to avoid following in their footsteps by intentionally misinterpreting and concealing the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and by extension, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of worldly gain. This includes picking and choosing which Islamic teachings to follow and which ones to ignore based on one’s own desires. The one who behaves in this manner does not worship Allah, the Exalted, they only worship their own desires. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

“Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?...”

A muslim must avoid treating Islam like a coat, which they put on and take off whenever it suits them. Islam is a way of life which must be acted upon in every situation, irrespective of if it contradicts their desires or if they understand the wisdom behind the commands and prohibitions of Islam. Only through this attitude will one obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

They must instead behave like the wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, despite the fact

they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. But just like a foolish patient who rejects the advice of their medical doctor, as it contradicts their desires, will face mental and physical problems so will the one who fails to sincerely act on all the teachings of Islam according to their potential, even if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, as mentioned earlier, some scholars from the people of the book received the anger and curse of Allah, the Exalted, as their actions misguided many others from the truth. Generally speaking, a muslim must avoid blindly following others in order to avoid becoming misguided by the actions and attitude of others. As mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah,

number 224, gaining knowledge is a duty on every muslim, therefore, one must gain and act on the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they consist of clear proofs and guidance which have been clarified by Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in verse 159. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 159:

"*Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture [the Torah and the Bible] - those are cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse.*"

A person must avoid behaving like cattle and instead use the intellect and common sense they have been granted in order to discover the truth of Islam for themself. This will protect them from becoming misguided by others and strengthen their faith in Islam so that they remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in every situation. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, a person must avoid misguiding others by inviting them towards sins. The sins of a person will increase depending on how many people act on their bad guidance, even after they die. Similarly, the good deeds of a person who invites others towards good deeds will keep increasing as long as someone is acting on their good guidance and advice, even if they have passed away. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 159:

“*Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture [the Torah and the Bible] - those are cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse.”*

This verse also warns against seeking religious knowledge with the intention of gaining worldly things, such as a high reputation, as this intention always leads to one misinterpreting and concealing the religious knowledge they possess. The one who behaves in this manner has been warned of Hell in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253. The inward foundation of Islam is one’s intention and if this is corrupt, then all of one’s actions will be corrupt. One must gain and act on religious knowledge in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This good intention will be reflected in their actions as they will not intentionally misinterpret nor conceal the religious knowledge they have gained. This does not mean a muslim cannot become a scholar in order to gain a livelihood, as gaining a lawful livelihood is a good deed in itself and as long as their intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, they will not be encouraged to intentionally misinterpret or conceal the religious knowledge they have obtained.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 159:

"*Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture [the Torah and the Bible] - those are cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse.*"

An issue which is indirectly connected to this verse is when a scholar or preacher avoids discussing important issues which will be questioned about on Judgement Day and instead they dedicate their energy to topics which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day, thereby failing their duty to clarify what Allah, the Exalted, revealed. A muslim must avoid studying or preaching any topic or issue which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day as this only distracts themself and others from more important issues, which will be questioned about on Judgement Day. This attitude also leads to disunity, as most muslim sects today have divided on issues which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day.

As per usual, Allah, the Exalted, then invites all people towards His mercy and forgiveness so that they can obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 160:

"*Except for those who repent and correct themselves and make evident [what they concealed]. Those - I will accept their repentance, and I am the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.*"

Generally speaking, sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Specifically, as indicated by verse 160, part of reforming one's character is to abandon intentionally misinterpreting and concealing divine knowledge which challenges one's desires. This includes abandoning picking and choosing which Islamic teachings to act upon and which ones to ignore depending on one's desires. The one who reforms themself in this manner will obtain the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. The one who is encompassed by the mercy and the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, will be guided and inspired to remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 160:

"*…and I am the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful."*

Generally speaking, a muslim must strive to act upon the divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, according to their created potential. In this case, they should learn to forgive others in order to gain the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

"…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?..."

This does not mean one should not alter their circumstances in order to avoid being wronged again by another person, as doing this is a part of Islamic teachings. But this discussion means that after adjusting one's circumstances so that they become safe from history repeating itself, they should learn to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who shows mercy to others will be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4941.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 161-162

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَمَاتُواْ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾

خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ ٱلْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

“Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers - upon them will be the curse of Allah and of the angels and the people, all together.

Abiding eternally therein. The punishment will not be lightened for them, nor will they be reprieved.”

A device which fails to fulfil the purpose of its creation will always be labeled a failure, even if it possesses many other positive features. Similarly, a human being is a creation of Allah, the Exalted, with a purpose. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship [obey] Me.”

Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 2:

“[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is better in deed…”

This purpose involves passing the test of life in this world. This is achieved when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails this test, by misusing the blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, will face misery, stress and trouble in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 161:

“Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers - upon them will be the curse of Allāh and of the angels and the people, all together.”

The ultimate way a person can fail this test is to disbelieve in the One who created them and granted them countless blessings. Just like an invention which fails to fulfil its purpose is discarded, so will the person who failed the purpose of their creation. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 161-162:

“Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers - upon them will be the curse of Allah and of the angels and the people, all together. Abiding eternally therein. The punishment will not be lightened for them, nor will they be reprieved.”

Generally speaking, as the entire creation belongs to and is under the complete control and jurisdiction of Allah, the Exalted, a person has no choice but to comply with His rules. Just like a person will face trouble if they fail to comply with the rules set by the government in charge of a particular country, so will they face trouble in both worlds if they fail to comply with the rules of the Owner of the universe. A person may be able to leave a country if they are not pleased with its rules but they will not be able to escape to a place where the rules and jurisdiction of Allah, the Exalted, do not apply. Therefore, one must comply with these rules, for their own sake. The one who understands this fact will comply with the rules of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to obey Him by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 161:

“Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers - upon them will be the curse of Allah and of the angels and the people, all together.”

This verse also warns people about bad companionship, as a person inevitably adopts the characteristics of their companions, whether positive or negative. The one who adopts bad companions will ultimately be affected in a negative way and this will cause them to curse their companionship and companions on the Day of Judgement. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verses 27-29:

“And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret] he will say, "Oh, I wish I had taken with the Messenger a way. Oh, woe to me! I wish I had not taken that one as a friend. He led me away from the remembrance after it had come to me. And ever is Satan, to man, a deserter."”

As indicated by these verses, one of the greatest traps of the Devil is to encourage people to adopt bad companions as this is a recipe for misguidance. One must instead adopt good companions which encourage them towards the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, as this will benefit them in both worlds. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

If a muslim’s companionship is bad enough, it may well encourage them to avoid acting on their faith, which can lead to one losing their faith before they leave this world. Faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience. Just like a plant which does not obtain nourishment, such as water, will die, so may well the faith of a muslim who fails to nourish their faith with acts of obedience. As indicated by the main verses, this is the greatest loss. In addition, good deeds are also the evidence one requires to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Therefore, simply claiming faith with one’s tongue is not good enough until it is supported by physical actions of obedience. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The main verses also make it clear that the way one lives in this world, is the way they will die and as indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232, a person will be resurrected in the same state they died in. Therefore, if one desires to be resurrected as a muslim who receives the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, then the must die as a muslim. If one desires to die as a muslim, then they must live and act as a muslim. The word muslim literally means the one who has practically submitted to Allah, the Exalted. In other words, they must actualize their faith by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings in order to live as a muslim. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 161-162:

“Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers - upon them will be the curse of Allah and of the angels and the people, all together. Abiding eternally therein. The punishment will not be lightened for them, nor will they be reprieved.”

These verses also give hope to people as this punishment is only reserved for those who die while disbelieving in Allah, the Exalted. This opens the door of mercy for everyone, as long as they are alive in this world. The door of accepting the truth and fulfilling their purpose of creation, so that they lead a meaningful existence which is full of peace of mind and success in both worlds. In addition, as this door of mercy is open for all, a muslim should never curse a non-muslim as they are unaware whether they will die as a muslim or not. Instead, a muslim should adopt the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by praying for the guidance of non-muslims and they should instead concentrate on nurturing and strengthening their own faith through learning and acting on Islamic teachings so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. In other words, one must be more concerned about their own ultimate end, as no one has been guaranteed to die a muslim, then concentrate their efforts on criticizing other people.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 163-167

وَإِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ لَّا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٣﴾

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا
يَنفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِن مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِن
كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا
لِّلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٥﴾

إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتُّبِعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ ﴿١٦٦﴾

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّءُوا مِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ
أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا هُم بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦٧﴾

"And your god is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him, the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing

therein every [kind of] moving creature, and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and earth are signs for a people who use reason.

And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah. And if only they who have wronged would consider [that] when they see the punishment, [they will be certain] that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment.

[And they should consider that] when those who have been followed disassociate themselves from those who followed [them], and they [all] see the punishment, and cut off from them are the ties [of relationship].

Those who followed will say, "If only we had another turn [at worldly life] so we could disassociate ourselves from them as they have disassociated themselves from us." Thus will Allah show them their deeds as regrets upon them. And they are never to emerge from the Fire."

Islam teaches mankind that the only One they must obey in every situation is their Creator and Sustainer, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 163:

"*And your god is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him…"*

In reality, whoever one obeys thereby modelling their life upon is what they worship, even if they claim not to believe in any deity. Humans have been created in a way whereby they must obey and follow something. Whether this something are other people, social media, fashion, culture or even their own desires. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

"Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?..."

Whatever or whomever a person obeys and follows is who they worship. Therefore, muslims must support their verbal declaration of faith with actions by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every situation over all other things. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner will be granted peace of mind and success by the Most Merciful. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 163:

“And your god is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him, the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who rejects the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and instead obeys and worships other things will be deprived of the mercy needed to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment, as no one can escape the control and authority of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 163:

"And your god is one God…"

After discussing the disobedience of the children of Israel and their punishment in the previous verses, even though they claimed to be the beloveds of Allah, the Exalted, Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that the same God who punished the children of Israel for their disobedience, will also punish any other community, such as the muslim community, if they persist on His disobedience also, as the rules and traditions of Allah, the Exalted, are universal for every community. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 62:

"[This is] the established way of Allāh with those who passed on before; and you will not find in the way of Allāh any change."

Muslims must therefore avoid the misguided attitude of believing they are superior to the previous nations thereby behaving as if the rules of Allah, the Exalted, do not apply to them, as this leads to wishful thinking in Allah, the Exalted, not hope in His mercy. Hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is always tied to His sincere obedience whereby one strives to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings, then hopes that Allah, the Exalted, will grant them mercy and forgiveness in both worlds. Whereas, the wishful thinker persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, while believing Allah, the Exalted, will grant them mercy and forgiveness in both worlds simply because they verbally claim to be a muslim. This difference between hope and wishful thinking has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. The tradition of Allah, the Exalted, of punishing those who persist on His disobedience has never changed for any community in the past nor will it change for the muslim nation, thinking otherwise only leads to wishful thinking and punishment in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 163:

“And your god is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him, the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.”

This verse also indicates that as the reason for creating the creation is to bestow mercy on them, obtaining this mercy is easier than obtaining the

anger and wrath of Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, every person has the ability to earn the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in order to obtain peace of mind in both worlds, as it only requires one to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings.

Allah, the Exalted, then explains some signs within the universe which clearly indicate His Oneness. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 163-164:

"*And your god is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him, the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful. Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth…"*

When one observes the creation of the Heavens and the Earth and the countless perfectly balanced systems, it becomes clear that there is only One who created and sustains the universe. For example, the perfect distance of the Sun from the Earth is a clear sign, as the Earth would not be inhabitable if the Sun was slightly closer or further away from it. Similarly, the Earth has been created in such a way which creates a balanced and pure atmosphere which allows life to thrive on it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 164:

"…*and the alternation of the night and the day…"*

The perfecting timings of the days and nights and their varied lengths throughout the year allow people to obtain maximum benefit from them. If the days were longer, people would become exhausted from the long hours. If the nights were longer, people would not have enough time to earn their livelihood and other useful things, such as knowledge. If the nights were shorter, then people would not be able to rest enough to obtain optimal health. Changes to the length of the day and nights would also affect crops, which would have a detrimental impact on the provision of people and animals. The fact that the days and nights and other balanced systems within the universe operate in perfect harmony also clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, as multiple Gods would desire different things, which would lead to chaos within the universe. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

"Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 164:

"…*and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain…"*

When one observes the perfectly balanced water cycle it also clearly indicates a Creator. Water from the sea evaporates, rises and then

condenses to produce acidic rain which comes down upon the mountains. These mountains neutralise the acidic rain so that people and animals can utilise it. If there were any changes to this perfectly balanced system it would lead to disaster for people and animals on Earth. The salt in the sea prevents the dead creatures within the ocean from contaminating it. If the ocean was allowed to become contaminated then sea life would not be possible and the impurity from the oceans would overwhelm life on land also. The water within the oceans and seas have been created in such a way that sea life can thrive within it while heavy ships can sail on top of it. If the composition of water was slightly different an imbalance would occur which would cause either sea life to thrive within the water or allow ships to sail on top of it but both would not be possible at the same time. Even to this very day, transport by sea is still the most commonly used form of transporting goods across the world. This perfect balance is therefore essential to life on Earth.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 164:

"…*and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness…"*

Denying the possibility of humans being resurrected on the Day of Judgement is a strange claim when there are many examples of resurrection which occur throughout the days, months and years. For example, Allah, the Exalted, uses rain to give life to a dead barren land and causes a dead seed to burst forth alive in order to provide for the creation. Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, can and will give life to the dead seed named human, who is buried in the Earth, like the dead seed which sprouts to life. The changing of the

seasons clearly show the resurrection. For example, during winter, the leaves of trees die and fall off and the tree appears lifeless. But during other seasons, the leaves grow once again and the tree appears full of life. The sleep wake cycle of all creatures is another example of resurrection. Sleep is the sister of death, as the senses of the sleeper are cut off. Allah, the Exalted, then returns a person's soul to them if they are destined to live on thereby giving life to the sleeping person once again. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 42:

"Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

Reflecting on these examples and many more clearly indicate the possibility of the final resurrection on the Day of Judgement.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 164:

"…*and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature…"*

Evolution is a form of mutation, which by its nature is imperfect. But when one observes the countless species they will find that they have been created in a perfectly balanced way so that they can thrive in the environment they live in. For example, the camel was designed to withstand high temperatures and go for long periods of time without the need to drink water. They are perfectly designed for desert life. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verse 17:

“Then do they not look at the camels - how they are created?”

The goat was designed in such a perfect way that impurities within its body are perfectly separated from the milk it produces. Any mixing of the two would make the milk undrinkable. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 66:

“And indeed, for you in grazing livestock is a lesson. We give you drink from what is in their bellies - between excretion and blood - pure milk, palatable to drinkers.”

Each species has been granted a specific life span which prevents one species overcoming others. For example, flies have a very short life span, 3-4 weeks, and lay up to 500 eggs. If its lifespan was longer, then the population of flies would become disproportionate and would cause them to overwhelm all other species in this world. Whereas, other creatures which have a very long life span have the ability to produce only a few offspring.

Again this allows for their population to be moderated. All of this cannot be an accident nor can the process of evolution explain it.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 164:

"…*and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and earth…"*

The winds are essential for wind pollination, which allow for crops, plants and trees to reproduce. In the earlier days, wind was essential for sea travel, which to this very day, is the main mode of transporting goods across the world. Winds are required to move the rainclouds to specific locations in order to provide water for the creation, something they cannot live without. A perfectly balanced system of the winds is observed within the Earth, as a lack of winds would lead to chaos for the creation and an increase in winds also leads to chaos for the creation. Similarly, rain is also perfectly balanced, as too little rain leads to droughts and famine and too much rain leads to mass floods. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verse 18:

"And We have sent down rain from the sky in a measured amount and settled it in the earth. And indeed, We are Able to take it away."

This perfectly balanced system cannot be random and clearly shows the hand of the Creator.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 164:

"*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature, and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and earth are signs for a people who use reason."*

The one who reflects on all these perfectly balanced systems cannot logically deny the existence of a single Creator who has power over all things. In addition, when one observes these perfectly balanced systems and others within the creation of the Heavens and the Earth they will notice one major thing which is not balanced, namely, the actions of people. The doer of good does not receive their full reward in this world and the evil doer does not receive their full punishment, even if they are punished by a government. It is logical to understand that the single Creator, Allah, the Exalted, who balanced all other systems within this universe will one day also balance the actions of people, the major imbalanced thing in this world. For this balancing of actions to occur, people's actions must come to an end first. This is the Day of Judgement when the actions of people will be judged and balanced forever.

But those who have already made their minds up to use the blessings they have been granted according to their own desires and live by a code of conduct which suits their desires or the desire of others will not appreciate nor be affected by the signs within the universe which clearly indicate the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, the importance of sincerely obeying Him and the inevitable Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 164-165:

"…are signs for a people who use reason. And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah…"

When one fails to pay heed to the signs within the universe and those discussed within Islamic teachings then they will inevitably obey and worship things besides Allah, the Exalted, such as their own desires, social media, fashion, culture and people. This will cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which only leads to misery, stress and trouble in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Only those who actualize their faith by taking heed of the signs within the universe which indicate the importance of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, will do so. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 165:

"…But those who believe are stronger in love for Allāh…"

They will strive to prove their faith through actions, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. They behave in this manner even when their desires are contradicted by Islamic teachings as they know doing this is best for them. They behave as the wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. As a result, they will be

granted peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if they do not possess many things, such as wealth. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 165:

"*And [yet], among the people are those who take other than Allah as equals [to Him]. They love them as they [should] love Allah. But those who believe are stronger in love for Allah…"*

The people of the book took their scholars as Lords by obeying them without question and taking their opinions to be the words and commands of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 31:

"They [the people of the book] have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah…"

Sadly, this often occurs amongst muslims who blindly follow and imitate their spiritual teachers and the spiritual exercises they ordain instead of adhering to the way commanded by Allah, the Exalted, the way of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins...""

A muslim must avoid behaving like cattle and instead use the common sense they have been granted in order to study and learn the teachings of the two sources of guidance, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instead of blindly following people who appear righteous. In truth, the more one follows and obeys other sources of religion knowledge the less they will follow and obey the two sources of guidance, which in turn, leads to misguidance. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, then warns those who disobey Him, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, that they will never be able to escape the consequences of their actions in this world or in the next, as Allah, the

Exalted, controls all things, including their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 165:

"…And if only they who have wronged would consider [that] when they see the punishment, [they will be certain] that all power belongs to Allāh and that Allāh is severe in punishment."

As mentioned earlier, this punishment will begin in this world whereby the very worldly things one possesses becomes a source of stress, misery and trouble for them. They will move from one stress to the next and lead a dark and constricted life, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Because of their heedlessness they will not be able to connect the reason for their depression and misery with their disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. As a result, they will blame the wrong things within their lives, such as the few good friends and relatives they possess. This will cause them to remove these good elements from their lives, which in turn, only leads to more misery and stress for them. And what awaits them in the hereafter is even more bitter and disastrous. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 165:

"…And if only they who have wronged would consider [that] when they see the punishment, [they will be certain] that all power belongs to Allāh and that Allāh is severe in punishment."

In the hereafter, their punishment, stress and anguish will push them to blame those who misguided them in this world, those who they took as their role models and obeyed in all situations. But this will not be accepted from them and they will not be able to shift blame to others, as each person is responsible for their own actions. In fact, even the Devil will announce this truth on Judgement Day thereby destroying the hopes of the wrongdoers of escaping the consequences of their own actions by blaming him. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 22:

“And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, "Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves…”"

Their stress and anguish will only increase when they observe how those who supported them in their misguided ways during their lives on Earth, friends and relatives, will dissociate themselves from them as they do not wish to share in their punishment. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 166:

“[And they should consider that] when those who have been followed disassociate themselves from those who followed [them], and they [all] see the punishment, and cut off from them are the ties [of relationship].”

Only those who accompany good people in this world will benefit from their companionships in both worlds. The people who encourage them to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in Islamic teachings. Chapter 43 Az Zukhruf, verse 67:

“Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.”

The only ties which will remain firm and count in one’s favour on the Day of Judgement are the ties forged in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, whether these ties are with good people, the Holy Quran or good deeds. One must therefore concentrate on forging ties in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verses 15-16:

“…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path.”

But those who choose the path of misguidance and obeying and worshipping other than Allah, the Exalted, will eventually face the inevitable Day of Judgement, when they will not be granted a second chance at reforming their behaviour. They will be left with regrets which will not aid them in the least. In fact, their regrets will only increase their anguish and stress. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 167:

“Those who followed will say, "If only we had another turn [at worldly life] so we could disassociate ourselves from them as they have disassociated themselves from us." Thus will Allāh show them their deeds as regrets upon them. And they are never to emerge from the Fire.”

Muslims must therefore take the countless opportunities of reforming their behaviour in this world before their time runs out. They must strive to utilize all their time and resources so that they dedicate them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and avoid obeying and worshipping all other things, such as social media, people, fashion, culture and their own desires, so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds and escape a dark and constricted life in this world and the unimaginable punishment and regret of the hereafter.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 168-171

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ كُلُوا۟ مِمَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ حَلَٰلًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ
مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾

إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُم بِٱلسُّوٓءِ وَٱلْفَحْشَآءِ وَأَن تَقُولُوا۟ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ٱتَّبِعُوا۟ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ قَالُوا۟ بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَآ أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابَآءَنَآ أَوَلَوْ كَانَ
ءَابَآؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

وَمَثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ كَمَثَلِ ٱلَّذِى يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَآءً وَنِدَآءً صُمٌّۢ بُكْمٌ عُمْىٌ فَهُمْ
لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.

He only orders you to evil and immorality and to say about Allah what you do not know.

And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing." Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?

The example of those who disbelieve is like that of one who shouts at what hears nothing but calls and cries [i.e., cattle or sheep] - deaf, dumb and blind, so they do not understand.”

Unlike many other religions and ways of life, Islam invites all people equally towards peace of mind and success in both worlds without any favoritism. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 168:

“O mankind…”

Islam makes it clear that the only thing which makes one superior to others is how much they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…”

It is important to note that as a person’s intention is hidden, no one can claim they or others are superior to other people. Instead, one must concentrate on sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, and advising others to do same.

Just like the inward foundation of Islam is adopting a good intention, similarly, the outward foundation of Islam is earning and consuming what is lawful. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 168:

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good…”

The one who earns and consumes the unlawful will destroy all their actions, as they have corrupted their outward foundation of Islam. This must be avoided at all costs, as the one who earns and consumes the unlawful will never find peace of mind and real success in either this world or the next, as Allah, the Exalted, controls their affairs and their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. The very things they obtain in an unlawful way will only become a source of stress, anxiety and trouble for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you,

and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 168:

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good…”

A muslim must also strive to earn and consume what is pure and healthy. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2380, that a person should allocate a third of their stomach to food, a third of it to drink and the remaining third to air. This is best achieved when one stops eating and drinking before they reach their full and if they are invited to another meal, they can partake in it without alerting others that they have already ate before. As overeating and unhealthy eating leads to countless mental and physical problems, the one who obtains a balanced and healthy diet, as prescribed by Islam, will take large steps towards achieving a balanced state of mind and body, which in turn leads to peace of mind. Whereas, the one who fails to eat in a balanced and healthy way, and even obtains and consumes what is unlawful, will obtain an unbalanced mental and physical state, which leads to countless mental and physical illnesses. This misery in both worlds is what the Devil desires for mankind and he therefore encourages them towards the unlawful and an unhealthy lifestyle. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 168:

"…eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy."

Learning and acting on Islamic knowledge is required to avoid this trap of the Devil. For example, one must always remember that as their lawful provision has been allocated to them, over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth, it will inevitably reach them and no other can withhold it from them nor increase it for them. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. The duty of every person is to use the energy and ability they have been granted in order to obtain their lawful provision. As long as one fulfils their side, Allah, the Exalted, will ensure they obtain the lawful provision He allocated to them so long ago, even if He has to move the Heavens and the Earth in order to achieve this. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 6:

"And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allāh is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. All is in a clear register."

In addition, no matter how much the Devil tries to beautify unlawful provision, a person must remember they can never escape the control and power of Allah, the Exalted, and facing the consequences of their actions in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 168:

“…*and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”*

This involves adopting a way of life and a code of conduct other than the way of life and code of conduct prescribed by Islam. In reality, they are only two paths in this world. The first path involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which includes using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds, as Allah, the Exalted, controls the affairs and outcomes of all things. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

This path will encourage one to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, which in turn ensures justice and peace spreads within society. In addition, this path involves adhering strictly to the two sources of guidance, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in all situations. Therefore, acting on other sources of religious knowledge must be avoided, even if they lead to good deeds. The fact is that the more one acts on other sources of religious

knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

The other path, the path of the Devil, involves misusing the blessings one has been granted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 168-169:

"…and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. He only orders you to evil and immorality and to say about Allāh what you do not know."

This can only lead to misery, difficulties and trouble in both worlds, even if one experiences moments of fun and entertainment. This is quite evident when one observes the rich and famous and despite their wealth and fame their lead depressed and miserable lives, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. In addition, this path only causes the spread of evil and immorality within society, as the people are encouraged to behave like cattle who are only interested in fulfilling their desires and therefore ignore anything which contradicts their way of life thereby behaving as if they are deaf, dumb and blind. This will prevent them from fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, or other people and will therefore prevent the spread of justice and peace within society. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 171:

“The example of those who disbelieve is like that of one who shouts at what hears nothing but calls and cries [i.e., cattle or sheep] - deaf, dumb and blind, so they do not understand.”

A society which behaves in such a manner will prevent the spread of justice and peace within it. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

One must therefore choose the correct path in life even if it contradicts their desires, as this is best for them. They must behave as a wise patient who

accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even if they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 169:

"…*and to say about Allah what you do not know."*

One of the biggest traps of the Devil is to encourage people to remain ignorant of Allah, the Exalted, and His divine attributes which have been explained in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. If a person behaves in this manner they will adopt false beliefs about Allah, the Exalted, which are highly disrespectful and these false beliefs will only encourage them to disobey Him. For example, the ignorant one will take the fact that Allah, the Exalted, is All Forgiving out of context and therefore they will persist on sins and His disobedience while assuming they will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted, as He is All Forgiving. This false belief would mean Allah, the Exalted, is unjust and unfair and would treat the doer of evil equally to the doer of good. To believe such a false thing is highly disrespectful towards Allah, the Exalted. In addition, this false attitude will only encourage one to persist on their disobedience which can only lead to punishment in both worlds. Therefore, muslims must learn and act on Islamic teachings in order to adopt the correct understanding in respect to Allah, the Exalted, the Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and Judgement Day, so that they remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings.

As discussed earlier, one of the major reasons why people reject the truthfulness of Islam and acting according to its teachings is because it challenges their desires. Allah, the Exalted, then mentions another major reason why people reject the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 170:

"*And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing." Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?"*

Blind imitation of others has always been a major source of misguidance. People must avoid acting like cattle and instead use the common sense and intellect they have been granted in order to analyze information and evidence in order to choose a suitable option in different situations of life. This applies to both worldly and religious matters. Unlike, most religions, Islam condemns blind imitation and invites mankind to use the intellect they have been granted in order to deduce the truthfulness of Islam for themselves. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

"Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me…."""

And chapter 34 Saba, verse 46:

“Say, "I only advise you of one [thing] - that you stand for Allāh, [seeking truth] in pairs and individually, and then give thought." There is not in your companion any madness. He is only a warner to you before a severe punishment.”

A muslim must therefore take the path of seeking and acting on knowledge in order to recognise the truth in every aspect of their life, instead of blindly following others. This attitude may be acceptable in children but not in adults. When one avoids gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge, they will inevitably fall for the traps of the Devil by adopting a code of conduct and way of life which encourages them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This can only ever lead to trouble in both worlds, even if a muslim fulfils the basic obligatory duties, which usually take less than an hour of a day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 168-169:

“…*and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy. He only orders you to evil and immorality and to say about Allah what you do not know.”*

Even blindly following others in what is good is not recommended in Islam, despite the fact one is doing good. This is because Islam teaches one to be self-aware of the truth and therefore act on it with conviction that it is the truth

and not act on it because someone else told them to. Even though blind imitation of others in what is good leads to peace of mind in both worlds but this type of person will easily become impatient and ungrateful in times of difficulties as they do not possess certainty of faith which comes with Islamic knowledge in order to remain patient and grateful at all times. This person will waver between obedience and disobedience not understanding their purpose nor aiming for a higher goal in life beyond this material world. The difference between this person, even if they obtain salvation in the hereafter, and the one who gains and acts on Islamic knowledge and lives their life with certainty of faith, is vastly different.

In a similar mentality, the people of the book blindly imitated their elders and took them as Lords by obeying them without question and taking their opinions to be the words and commands of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 31:

"They [the people of the book] have taken their scholars and monks as lords besides Allah…"

Sadly, some Muslims also blindly follow their scholars and leaders without using the common sense and intellect Allah, the Exalted, granted them. Even though following a rightly guided scholar is important yet a Muslim still needs to use the intelligence granted to them by studying Islamic teachings in order to strengthen their faith. But some hold onto ignorance and blindly follow their scholars as if they are perfect and immune to errors. Therefore, a Muslim who follows a particular scholar who advocates a specific belief should not act like a fanatic and believe their scholar is always right thereby hating those

who oppose their scholar's opinion. This behaviour is not disliking something/someone for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. As long as there is a legitimate difference of opinion amongst the scholars a Muslim following a particular scholar should respect this and not dislike others who differ from what the scholar they follow believes.

If a person persists on blind imitation, then their life becomes nothing more than the life of cattle, who blindly follow others. In most cases, this will only lead to trouble, stress and misery in both worlds as the person will not have the strength to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in every occasion, even if they blindly follow good people. And it is inevitable for the blind imitator to follow bad people and their opinions which contradict the teachings of Islam, even if they appear as righteous people. The sad thing is that this blind imitator will assume they are acting correctly when in fact they have no idea how far from the straight path they truly are. The one who knows they are lost can perhaps adjust their course, but the one who believes they are on the correct path is unlikely to adjust their course. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 171:

"*The example of those who disbelieve is like that of one who shouts at what hears nothing but calls and cries [i.e., cattle or sheep] - deaf, dumb and blind, so they do not understand.*"

The blind imitator is unlikely to take heed to any good advice they are told whenever it contradicts the way of those who they blindly imitate. In this case, talking to them and talking to cattle is one in the same. A muslim must therefore avoid blindly imitating others and instead strive to learn and act on

Islamic knowledge so that they obtain certainty of faith and understand and fulfil the purpose of their creation with insight. This has been indicated in verse 170, as Allah, the Exalted, commands people to practically follow the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instead of only verbally claiming belief in them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 170:

“And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allāh has revealed,"…”

The one who behaves in this manner will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, even if it contradicts the way and belief of others. This in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 170:

“*And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing." Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?”*

This verse also indicates the importance of consulting those who possess knowledge and act on it in both religious and worldly matters. A person must therefore choose carefully who they consult in their affairs and limit these people to those who possess knowledge on the issue they have. For example, the one who has a medical problem should seek the one who possesses medical knowledge, such as a medical doctor. And the one who seeks religious advice must seek the one who possesses religious knowledge, such as a scholar. It is sad to observe that in worldly matters, muslims often consult specialists but in religious matters they often follow the advice of any ignorant person. In addition, one must only consult those who fear Allah, the Exalted, as they are the only ones who possess true knowledge and as they will never advise others to disobey Allah, the Exalted, in any situation. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

“…Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge…”

One must therefore only consult those who possess the correct knowledge and who also fear Allah, the Exalted. Otherwise they will blindly follow those who will misguide them, even if this is not their intention.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 172-173

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُلُواْ مِن طَيِّبَٰتِ مَا رَزَقۡنَٰكُمۡ وَٱشۡكُرُواْ لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمۡ إِيَّاهُ تَعۡبُدُونَ ١٧٢

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلۡمَيۡتَةَ وَٱلدَّمَ وَلَحۡمَ ٱلۡخِنزِيرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ بِهِۦ لِغَيۡرِ ٱللَّهِۖ فَمَنِ ٱضۡطُرَّ غَيۡرَ بَاغٖ وَلَا عَادٖ فَلَآ إِثۡمَ عَلَيۡهِۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٌ ١٧٣

“O you who have believed, eat from the good [i.e., lawful] things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is [indeed] Him that you worship.

He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah. But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 172:

“O you who have believed, eat from the good [i.e., lawful] things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah…”

In the previous section of verses, Allah, the Exalted, invites all of mankind towards His obedience in the form of obtaining and using what is lawful and pure. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 168:

“O mankind, eat from whatever is on earth [that is] lawful and good…”

The main verses under discussion make it clear that out of mankind only those who truly believe in Allah, the Exalted, will remain firm on obtaining and using what is lawful and good. One can therefore assess whether they are considered a believer in the eyes of Islam by observing whether they fulfil this command or not. In addition, in the case of the believers, Allah, the Exalted, does not mention lawful and instead only mentions good things. This indicates that only a true believer will avoid obtaining and using the unlawful, as this specific command has been omitted in the case of the believers. So if a person who claims to be a muslim obtains and uses the unlawful, it is a

clear sign they are not considered a true believer in the sight of Islam. This is because the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and using what is lawful. If this outward foundation is corrupt, then all the things a person does will be corrupted. Omitting the word lawful and keeping the word good also indicates that the only real good and pure things in this world are what Allah, the Exalted, has decreed as lawful for people. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 157:

"…and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil…"

As Allah, the Exalted, alone created the universe and all the things within them, He alone is the One who knows best what is good for a person and what is bad for them, even if this is not obvious to them. For example, many of the negative effects of alcohol on the human body and mind has been recently discovered through scientific research, even though Allah, the Exalted, prohibited it over 1400 years ago.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 172:

"O you who have believed, eat from the good [i.e., lawful] things…"

A muslim must also strive to earn and consume what is pure and healthy. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2380, that a person should allocate a third of their stomach to food, a third of it to drink and the remaining third to air. This is best achieved when one stops eating and drinking before they reach their full and if they are invited to another meal, they can partake in it without alerting others that they have already ate before. As overeating and unhealthy eating leads to countless mental and physical problems, the one who obtains a balanced and healthy diet, as prescribed by Islam, will take large steps towards achieving a balanced state of mind and body, which in turn leads to peace of mind. Whereas, the one who fails to eat in a balanced and healthy way, and even obtains and consumes what is unlawful, will obtain an unbalanced mental and physical state, which leads to countless mental and physical illnesses.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 172:

"O you who have believed, eat from the good [i.e., lawful] things…"

Generally speaking, this also reminds muslims to adhere strictly to the teachings of Islam instead of following other things, such as their own opinions, cultural practices or sources of religious knowledge other than the two sources of guidance, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one acts on other sources of knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance and an unhealthy and unbalanced mental and physical state. This is one of the reasons why the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds all muslims that every worldly thing they possess was created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 172:

“O you who have believed, eat from the good [i.e., lawful] things which We have provided for you…”

It is vital to remember that in this world everything a person has been granted is only a loan, it is not a gift. Just like all loans, the loan granted by Allah, the Exalted, in the form of worldly blessings must be returned to Him. This is achieved when one uses the worldly blessings they have been loaned in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who correctly repays their loan will be granted peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to repay their loan back to Allah, the Exalted, will face a penalty, just like people who fail to repay their worldly loans face a penalty. The very blessings they possess will become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. And the penalty of the hereafter is even more bitter. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

On the other hand, the blessings granted to muslims in Paradise are a gift. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 43:

"…And they will be called, "This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do.""

This is why a person in Paradise will be free to use the blessings they have been gifted as they see fit.

It is therefore vital to understand the difference between the loan one is granted in this world and the gift in Paradise so that they behave correctly in this world by repaying the loan back to Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been loaned in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who acts in this way has shown gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 172:

"O you who have believed, eat from the good [i.e., lawful] things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah…"

In addition, gratitude involves correcting one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A sign of this is that a person does not

desire nor hope for any compensation or gratitude from the people they help. Gratitude with the tongue is speaking what is good or remaining silent. And as discussed earlier, gratitude with one's actions is using the blessings one has been loaned in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner has been guaranteed an increase in blessings, mercy and forgiveness in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

In addition, behaving in this manner is the practical proof a muslim needs in order to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 172:

"O you who have believed, eat from the good [i.e., lawful] things which We have provided for you and be grateful to Allāh if it is [indeed] Him that you worship."

This further indicates the importance of understanding that the worship of Allah, the Exalted, is in fact His obedience in every situation and when interacting and using every blessing one has been granted. This is further supported by the fact that Allah, the Exalted, mentioned obtaining and using what is good and lawful and connected that to His worship. He did not

discuss acts of worship. Therefore, the worship of Allah, the Exalted, extends far beyond the five daily obligatory prayers, which take less than an hour of a day to perform.

Allah, the Exalted, then explains a general concept through a specific one in order to encourage people to sincerely obey Him, as it is in their best interest to do so. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 173:

"*He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah…"*

Generally speaking, the only few things which have been made unlawful in Islam are things where the harm outweighs the perceived benefits. For example, before the prohibition of alcohol and gambling, Allah, the Exalted, indicated this rule by stating that their harm outweighs any perceived benefits one could obtain through them. This is obvious to anyone who possesses common sense. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah 219:

"They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people…""

But none the less, the rules of Islam are only in place to benefit people. Allah, the Exalted, gains no benefit or harm from the obedience or disobedience of people. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verse 6:

“…And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allāh is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.”

Therefore, one must, for their own sake and benefit, accept and act on the teachings of Islam, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, as this alone leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Otherwise, the very worldly things they possess will become a source of misery, stress and trouble for them in both worlds, as they pursued the things which only harmed them both physically and mentally. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

They must behave like the wise patient who accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 173:

“*He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah…”*

Modern day science has already proven the unhealthy nature of eating from rotting corpses, blood and the meat of pigs. Slaughtering and eating animals which are dedicated to other than Allah, the Exalted, leads to a spiritual illness which can corrupt a person’s faith. The one who behaves in such a manner will begin to assume that the others they dedicate their food to can cause them benefit in both worlds. This is one of the attitudes which led to polytheism in history and can even encourage a muslim to do the same, even if their polytheism is subtle and not so obvious. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 3:

“Unquestionably, for Allāh is the pure religion. And those who take protectors besides Him [say], "We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allāh in position."…”

Dedicating things to others can encourage one to rely on others to intercede and save them in both worlds, which in turn only encourages one to adopt a lazy and misguided attitude whereby they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, believing some other person will save them in both worlds. This only leads to trouble and stress in both worlds. Therefore, one of the root causes of this attitude has been cut off in the main verses under discussion, whereby muslims have been commanded to adopt complete sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, by acting in order to please Him and not others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 173:

“He has only forbidden to you dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allāh…”

As per usual, Allah, the Exalted, then indicates the easy going nature of Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 173:

“…But whoever is forced [by necessity], neither desiring [it] nor transgressing [its limit], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.”

The one who is forced to do something unlawful due to extreme circumstances will be excused by Allah, the Exalted, as He does not burden a person beyond their capacity. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2043, that anyone who commits a sin out of forgetfulness or through coercion will be forgiven by Allah, the Exalted.

This also makes it clear that everyone has the ability to adhere to the commands and prohibitions within Islam in normal circumstances. Therefore, a muslim must never fool themself into committing sins while claiming they cannot control themselves, as this excuse will never be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, and therefore leads to destruction in both worlds. A muslim must strive to adhere to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings and know that this is within their ability to achieve. This is the person who will obtain the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds, even if they happen to commit sins along the way in moments of heedlessness as they will adhere to sincere repentance. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 173:

"…*Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."*

Whereas, the one who adopts wishful thinking, whereby they persist on sins while making excuses in order to make themself feel better, may well be deprived of the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This will only ever lead to stress, misery and trouble in both worlds.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 174-176

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكۡتُمُونَ مَآ أَنزَلَ ٱللَّهُ مِنَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَيَشۡتَرُونَ بِهِۦ ثَمَنٗا قَلِيلًا أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ مَا يَأۡكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمۡ إِلَّا ٱلنَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمۡ وَلَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ١٧٤

أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱشۡتَرَوُاْ ٱلضَّلَٰلَةَ بِٱلۡهُدَىٰ وَٱلۡعَذَابَ بِٱلۡمَغۡفِرَةِۚ فَمَآ أَصۡبَرَهُمۡ عَلَى ٱلنَّارِ ١٧٥

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ نَزَّلَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ بِٱلۡحَقِّۗ وَإِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱخۡتَلَفُواْ فِي ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ لَفِي شِقَاقِۭ بَعِيدٖ ١٧٦

"Indeed, they who conceal what Allah has sent down of the Book and exchange it for a small price - those consume not into their bellies except the Fire. And Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them. And they will have a painful punishment.

Those are the ones who have exchanged guidance for error and forgiveness for punishment. How patient they are for [in pursuit of] the Fire!

That is because Allah has sent down the Book in truth. And indeed, those who differ over the Book are in extreme dissension."

Allah, the Exalted, warns the people of the book living in Medina, and by extension the muslim community, of intentionally concealing and misinterpreting the divine knowledge granted to them for the sake of worldly gain, such as wealth and social status. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 174:

"Indeed, they who conceal what Allah has sent down of the Book and exchange it for a small price - those consume not into their bellies except the Fire…"

The scholars from the people of the book were fully aware of the truthfulness of the Holy Quran as they recognized its Author, Allah, the Exalted. And they recognized the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran as the they had both been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

They intentionally edited, misinterpreted and concealed the knowledge within their divine scriptures which discussed the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as Islam directly challenged their way of life and would prevent them from misusing the blessings they had been granted. In addition, as their faith was deeply rooted in lineage, especially the Jewish faith, they could not accept or follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he was not from their lineage, the children of Israel. Accepting and following him would have destroyed their false claim of being the superior race as they were the descendants of the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. This, they could not accept to do.

As a result of their behaviour, they misguided many others from the truthfulness of Islam and therefore invited the curse and anger of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 159:

"*Indeed, those who conceal what We sent down of clear proofs and guidance after We made it clear for the people in the Scripture [the Torah and the Bible] - those are cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse.*"

Generally speaking, this verse warns muslims to avoid following in their footsteps by intentionally misinterpreting and concealing the knowledge found within the Holy Quran and by extension, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for the sake of

worldly gain. This includes picking and choosing which Islamic teachings to follow and which ones to ignore based on one’s own desires. The one who behaves in this manner does not worship Allah, the Exalted, they only worship their own desires. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

“Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?...”

A muslim must avoid treating Islam like a coat, which they put on and take off whenever it suits them. Islam is a way of life which must be acted upon in every situation, irrespective of if it contradicts their desires or if they understand the wisdom behind the commands and prohibitions of Islam. Only through this attitude will one obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

They must instead behave like the wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. But just like a foolish patient who rejects the advice of their medical doctor, as it contradicts their desires, will face mental and physical problems so will the one who fails to sincerely act on all the teachings of Islam according to their potential, even

if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 174:

“*Indeed, they who conceal what Allah has sent down of the Book and exchange it for a small price - those consume not into their bellies except the Fire. And Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection…”*

Those who behave in this manner will be deprived of the noble status of speaking to Allah, the Exalted, the Lord of the worlds, as they intentionally ignored His words in this world. A muslim must therefore avoid reciting the Holy Quran blindly and instead strive to understand and implement its teachings so that they benefit from it in both worlds, which includes the opportunity to speak to Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter.

In addition, ignoring divine teachings prevents one from becoming spiritually and physically purified. Divine teachings purifies one's intention so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A sign of this positive intention is that one does not expect nor hope for any compensation or gratitude from people. Divine teachings purifies one's speech so that they only speak what is good or remain silent. Divine teachings also purifies one's actions so that they use all the blessings they have been granted according to its teachings. This purification leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds. But those who avoid purifying themselves in this world, will be deprived the purification of the hereafter granted to those who sincerely obeyed Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 174:

"…*And Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them…"*

When one is cut off from the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in this way, then their punishment is inevitable and inescapable. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 174:

“…And they will have a painful punishment.”

Allah, the Exalted, then summarises the great loss these people have willingly accepted when they chose pursuing their worldly desires over fulfilling the purpose of their creation thereby obtaining peace of mind and success in both worlds, through the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 175:

“*Those are the ones who have exchanged guidance for error and forgiveness for punishment. How patient they are for [in pursuit of] the Fire!”*

As Allah, the Exalted, alone controls everything within the universe, including one’s spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, no one can escape their inevitable punishment in both worlds if they choose to disobey Him. This is quite evident when one observes the rich and famous and despite everything their possess they are genuinely not content with life and are often the most depressed and suicidal people in the world.

Every person must therefore decide between the two paths laid in front of them. The first path involves misusing the blessings one has been granted, which only leads to misguidance and punishment in both worlds. The second path involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, according to divine teachings, which in turn leads to right guidance and forgiveness in both worlds. They are only two paths, no third. Therefore, everyone should choose the path they desire and work hard for it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 175:

"*Those are the ones who have exchanged guidance for error and forgiveness for punishment. How patient they are for [in pursuit of] the Fire!"*

Allah, the Exalted, has made these two paths crystal clear within His book and therefore there are no excuses left but to choose and adhere to the correct path if one desires peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 176:

"*That is because Allah has sent down the Book in truth…"*

In truth can also mean with purpose. Therefore, the one who fulfils the purpose of the Holy Quran, which involves correctly reciting it, understanding it and sincerely acting on it will have chosen the correct path in this world. The path which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind and

success in both worlds. Muslims must be extremely cautious not to remain on the first stage of only reciting the Holy Quran in a language they do not understand, as the Holy Quran is not a book of recitation, it is a book of guidance. Guidance can only be achieved when one understands and acts on the Holy Quran. Sadly, as many muslims fail to fulfil the purpose of the Holy Quran correctly they do not obtain peace of mind despite the fact they regularly recite it and fulfil the basic obligatory duties, such as the obligatory prayers, as they fail to use every blessing they have been granted correctly as they are unaware of how to do this. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 176:

"…*And indeed, those who differ over the Book are in extreme dissension."*

One must therefore avoid this attitude and strive to understand and act on the Holy Quran and by extension, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they do not oppose the guidance granted to them by Allah, the Exalted. As discussed earlier, this can only ever lead to trouble, stress and punishment in both worlds.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 177

۞ لَّيْسَ ٱلْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ وَٱلْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ
ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَٱلنَّبِيِّۦنَ وَءَاتَى ٱلْمَالَ عَلَىٰ حُبِّهِۦ ذَوِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ وَٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ
وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينَ وَٱبْنَ ٱلسَّبِيلِ وَٱلسَّآئِلِينَ وَفِى ٱلرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَى ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ
وَٱلْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَٰهَدُوا۟ وَٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ فِى ٱلْبَأْسَآءِ وَٱلضَّرَّآءِ وَحِينَ ٱلْبَأْسِ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ
ٱلَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا۟ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

"Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous."

Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that righteousness and piety must be shown in every situation a person faces and when they interact and use every blessing they have been granted. It therefore extends far beyond facing the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, during the five daily obligatory prayers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"*Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west…"*

The one who observes Islam as a set of rituals will fail to understand this reality and will therefore easily misuse the blessings they have been granted, even if they fulfil the few daily and weekly rituals Islam prescribes. This is one of the main reasons why many muslims fail to obtain peace of mind despite the fact they fulfil the daily obligatory rituals, as peace of mind can only be obtained when one makes Islam a way of life and a complete code of conduct which affects every situation they encounter and how they use every blessing they have been granted.

The first aspect of righteousness mentioned is to believe in Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…*but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah…"*

Real belief in Allah, the Exalted, involves supporting one's verbal declaration of belief with actions. The one who believes Allah, the Exalted, is their Lord will inevitably accept their servanthood to Him. A true servant does not search for their own pleasure, nor do they expect others to please them. They will prioritize the pleasure and obedience to their Master over all other things, such as obeying and following people, their own desires, social media, fashion and culture. The only thing a servant desires is to please their Master. In addition, a servant accepts that everything they possess, including their own life, belongs to their Creator and Master, Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they will hasten to use everything they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A true servant will understand that as Allah, the Exalted, is their Creator and Lord and the Creator and Lord of all things, they cannot obtain peace of mind while disobeying Him, as He controls all things, including the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind. They will therefore strive hard in His obedience by using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings, as this alone leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The more a person acts in this manner, the stronger their belief in Allah, the Exalted, is. In addition, the one who believes in Allah, the Exalted, will be certain that they will be held accountable for their deeds on the Day of Judgement. This will further encourage them to actualize their faith by practically preparing for it, which involves using the blessings one has been

granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, according to Islamic teachings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allāh, the Last Day…"

Therefore, the one who verbally claims belief in Allah, the Exalted, and the Day of Judgement but fails to practically obey Allah, the Exalted, thereby failing to practically prepare for the Day of Judgement, must reassess their faith, as their lack of good actions are a proof of their lack of belief in Allah, the Exalted, and the Last Day.

One's faith in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgement Day can be established and strengthened through studying and acting on the Holy Quran and by observing the signs within the universe pointed out by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, when one observes the countless balanced systems within the universe, such as the perfect distance of the Sun from the Earth, the water cycle, the density of the oceans, which allow ships to sail on them while allowing sea life to thrive within them, and many more systems, they will observe the hand of a Creator. So many perfectly balanced systems cannot be the consequences of random events. In addition, if there were multiple Gods then it would lead to chaos as each God would desire something different within the universe. This is clearly not the case and therefore indicates a single God, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined…”

There are also countless signs within the universe which indicate the coming of Judgement Day. For example, when one observes the perfectly balanced systems within the creation of the Heavens and the Earth they will notice one major thing which is not balanced, namely, the actions of people. The doer of good does not receive their full reward in this world and the evil doer does not receive their full punishment, even if they are punished by a government. It is logical to understand that the single Creator, Allah, the Exalted, who balanced all other systems within this universe will one day also balance the actions of people, the major imbalanced thing in this world. For this balancing of actions to occur, people’s actions must come to an end first. This is the Day of Judgement when the actions of people will be judged and balanced forever.

In addition, Allah, the Exalted, uses rain to give life to a dead barren land and causes a dead seed to burst forth alive in order to provide for the creation. Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, can and will give life to the dead seed named human, who is buried in the Earth, like the dead seed which sprouts to life. The changing of the seasons clearly shows the resurrection. For example, during winter, the leaves of trees die and fall off and the tree appears lifeless. But during other seasons, the leaves grow once again and the tree appears full of life. The sleep wake cycle of all creatures is another example of resurrection. Sleep is the sister of death, as the senses of the sleeper are cut off. Allah, the Exalted, then returns a person’s soul to them if they are destined to live on thereby giving life to the sleeping person once again. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 42:

“Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”

Reflecting on these examples and many more clearly indicate the possibility of the resurrection of humans and its need on the Day of Judgement.

A vital aspect of faith is belief in the unseen, such as the existence of Hell, Paradise and the Angels. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

“…*but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels…*

Faith in the unseen, the things which are beyond the perception of the five senses, is a vital part of faith as faith in things which are fully perceived and understood does not have the same value as believing in something which cannot be perceived by the five senses, even though they are signs indicating its existence. This is why Allah, the Exalted, will not accept the faith of the one who testifies to His Oneness on Judgement Day as they have witnessed the unseen, such as Hell, Paradise and the Angels. One must

therefore strengthen their faith in the unseen things within the creation by studying and acting on the teachings of Islam. This will ensure one's faith in the unseen things go beyond a verbal declaration of faith and are instead reflected in their actions as it encourages them to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, the one who is certain that two Angels are constantly with them who are recording their every word and action in preparation for Judgement Day, will control their speech and actions, even when they are alone.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book…"

Belief in the Holy Quran involves fulfilling its different aspects. These include reciting it correctly and regularly, understanding it and acting on its teachings. A muslim must avoid remaining on the first level whereby they only recite the Holy Quran in a language they do not understand. The Holy Quran is not a book of recitation, it is a book of guidance. Guidance from it can only be achieved when one understands and acts on it. Just like a map will only lead one to their desired destination if they understand and act on it, the Holy Quran can only lead one to peace of mind in both worlds when they understand and act on it. Sadly, failing to encompass the different aspects of the Holy Quran is a major reason why muslims who recite it regularly fail to obtain peace of mind, as they fail to understand and act on its teachings. Acting on it will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in

ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. But those who fail to understand and implement its teachings will inevitably misuse the blessings they have been granted, which only leads to stress, trouble, and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

“…but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allāh, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets…”

Belief in the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, involves practically following their way of life, their conduct and teachings which have been discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Their beautiful conduct is summarized, completed and perfected by the sublime conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must support their verbal declaration of faith in him by practically learning and acting on his life, teachings and noble character. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allāh often.”

And chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins…”"

And chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Therefore, claiming love and respect for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while failing to act on his teachings and character contradicts this verbal claim. Just like everyone hopes for his intercession on Judgement Day, they must fear the chance of him testifying against them on Judgement Day if they fail to learn and act on his traditions

and on what he brought, meaning, the Holy Quran. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 30:

“And the Messenger has said, "O my Lord, indeed my people have taken this Qur’ān as [a thing] abandoned."”

If one desires his intercession instead of his testimony against them on Judgement Day, then they must learn and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and his traditions. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds.

In addition, verbally claiming love and respect for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while failing to follow his character and conduct has no value in Islam, as the previous nations also claim to love their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to practically follow their teachings they will not unite with them in the hereafter. Therefore, the one who desires to unite with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter must practically follow and act on his teachings and character.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions the different ways He expects people to use the blessings He has granted them, such as wealth, time, energy and

their social influence. Allah, the Exalted, acknowledges that using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is difficult to do as people are often inclined to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to themselves, other people, culture and fashion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…*and gives wealth, in spite of love for it…"*

A person must first understand that as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the universe, including their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind and who does not. Therefore, the one who uses the blessings they have been granted correctly will be granted peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who chooses to misuse the blessings they have been granted, will not obtain peace of mind, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, one must understand the difference between the blessings granted to them in this world and the blessings one receives in Paradise. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 43:

“…And they will be called, "This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do."”

As indicated by this verse, a muslim will inherit Paradise, meaning, they will be given ownership of it as a gift. This is the reason why muslims will be free to do whatever they please in Paradise as they will be granted its ownership. Whereas, the blessings in this material world have been granted to people as a loan and not as a gift. A gift indicates ownership whereas a loan means the blessing must be returned to its true Owner namely, Allah, the Exalted. The only way to return the blessings of this material world which have been given as a loan to people is by using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This is in fact true gratitude and leads to increase in blessings and mercy in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

The worldly blessings which have been granted to people as a loan must return to its true Owner, Allah, the Exalted, willingly or forcefully. If it is returned willingly then they will be blessed with much reward but if it is returned forcefully, such as through their death, then these blessings will become a burden for them in both this world and in the hereafter.

It is vital for muslims to understand the difference between a gift and a loan so that they are encouraged to use the blessings in this material world in the correct way.

Therefore, despite having the urge to misuse the blessings one has been granted, they must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the advice of their medical doctor, knowing it is best for them even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Just like this wise patient will achieve peace of mind and body, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings thereby using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

In addition, a person must remember a simply Islamic principle, the more one gives, the more they will receive meaning, the more they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the more peace of mind, mercy and blessings they will be granted in both worlds. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 92:

“Never will you attain the good [reward] until you spend [in the way of Allah] from that which you love. And whatever you spend - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.”

This verse makes it clear that a person will not possess complete faith until they are willing to dedicate the things they love for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Generally speaking, Muslims are happy to dedicate their precious time on the things which please them. But they refuse to dedicate time to pleasing Allah, the Exalted, beyond the obligatory duties which barely takes an hour or two in one's day. Countless Muslims are happy to dedicate their physical strength in different pleasurable activities yet, many of them refuse

to dedicate it to things which please Allah, the Exalted, such as voluntary fasting. More commonly, people are happy to strive in things which they desire, like obtaining excess wealth which they do not need even if it means they have work extra and give up their sleep yet, how many strive in this way in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings? How many give up their precious sleep in order to offer voluntary prayers?

It is strange that Muslims desire lawful worldly and religious blessings yet, overlook a simple fact. That they will only gain these things when they dedicate the blessings they possess in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. How can they dedicate minimal things to Him and still expect to achieve all their dreams? This attitude is incredibly strange. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 15:

"Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the self or soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives…"

Allah, the Exalted, always gives all-encompassing advice within the Holy Quran. In this case, Allah, the Exalted, often urges the kind treatment of one's relatives within the Holy Quran, as acting on this single advice alone would ensure prosperity, peace and justice in society. If each person treated their relatives kindly, no other aid from an outside source would ever be required. This would ensure each member of every family unit is treated with kindness, which in turn would have a positive effect on the entire society.

One must aid their relatives in anything which is praiseworthy in Islam and warn them against anything which is blameworthy. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

Sadly, many muslims today ignore this advice and instead aid others according to their relationship with them, irrespective of if the thing they are aiding them in is good or bad. A muslim must adhere to the sequence advised in the following verse and only aid their relatives in things which are directly connected to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, 83:

"…*Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good and to relatives…"*

One must aid their relatives according to their means, which includes emotional, physical and financial support. This is best achieved when one treats others how they desire other people to treat them. One must not pay much notice to the standard and definition of a good relative defined by people, as their standard and definition often contradicts the definition and standard set by Islam. Instead, one must fulfill the rights of their relatives according to the teachings of Islam for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of whether they are considered a good relative by their relatives or not. Finally, a muslim must never sever ties with their relatives for worldly reasons, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984, that the one who severs ties with their relatives for worldly reasons will not enter Paradise. In addition, even though a muslim can cut off ties with their relative over religious reasons, none the less, it is best to maintain ties with their relative by aiding them in things which are good and warning them in things which are bad, as this may encourage their relative to sincerely repent from their misguidance.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…*and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves…"*

Orphans are often mentioned in Islamic teachings as they are often deprived of their rights because of their social weakness. Therefore, a muslim must

ensure they aid those who are considered socially weak in society, such as orphans and widows, according to their means. Sponsoring orphans and widows has become extremely easy in this day and age as one can set this up online within a few minutes. And the sponsorship amount is often less than their monthly phone bill. Therefore, muslims must not ignore this vital part of Islam as it leads to the continuous support of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the one who takes care of an orphan will obtain his closeness in Paradise. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6005. Finally, the one who takes care of the needy, such as a widow, will be granted the same reward as the one who prays all night and fasts every day. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6006. Therefore, the one who finds it difficult to perform voluntary good deeds, such as the voluntary night prayer and voluntary fasts, should act on this Hadith in order to achieve this reward with minimal effort.

As discussed earlier, it is important to note that one should always remember that whatever means they possess, such as wealth, has been granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, as a loan and not as a gift. A loan must be repaid to its owner. The way one repays the loan granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, is by using them in ways pleasing to Him. Therefore, the one who aids the needy is only repaying the debt they owe Allah, the Exalted. When one remembers this it will prevent them from behaving as if they are doing a favor to Allah, the Exalted, or the needy person. In reality, Allah, the Exalted, favored them by granting them worldly blessings and by granting them an opportunity to gain countless reward by aiding the needy. In addition, the needy person has done the donor a favor by accepting their help. If every needy person rejected the aid of others then how will one obtain the reward mentioned in divine teachings? Remembering these points will prevent one from destroying their reward by adopting the incorrect attitude.

Finally, aiding the needy includes fulfilling any lawful need a person may have. This includes emotional, physical and financial needs. Therefore, no muslim, irrespective of how little wealth they possess, can excuse themself from acting on this verse.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…*and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy the needy, the traveler…"*

The traveler is the stranger who is stuck in a foreign land. Allah, the Exalted, encourages Muslims to give them some of their wealth in order to help them on their journey if they need it. The one who possesses wealth should show compassion towards this stranger and help them in whatever way they can even if that is by giving them food or a means of transportation or protecting them from any wrongdoing that may occur to them during their journey.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…*and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves…"*

As taking captives during battles and wars as slaves was widely practiced throughout the known world, Islam could not allow muslims to have an unfair advantage against their enemies by prohibiting taking captives during battles as slaves. This would only cause the muslim slave population to increase while the disbelieving slave population would become non-existent. Therefore, Islam took steps to firstly improve the situation of slaves so that they were treated with the utmost respect and care. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, urged such good conduct towards slaves that they were treated like family members. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has commanded muslims to feed their slaves what they themselves eat, to dress them in the same clothes they themselves dress in and to never overburden them with tasks and instead aid them in their daily tasks. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 4313. In addition, Islam also took steps to eradicate slavery altogether by making the act of freeing a slave an extremely righteous deed with heavy rewards. For example, the one who freed their slave for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, was promised freedom from Hell, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1541. Furthermore, Islam set the first expiation for certain sins as freeing a slave. For example, chapter 58 Al Mujadila, verse 3:

"And those who pronounce ẓihār from their wives and then [wish to] go back on what they said - then [there must be] the freeing of a slave before they touch one another. That is what you are admonished thereby; and Allāh is Aware of what you do."

When these teachings were implemented within the Islamic society, slaves were treated like family members and eventually slavery as it was widely practiced was eradicated. Sadly, in some parts of the world, slavery in different forms still exist, such as financial slavery. Therefore, muslims must play their part in completely eradicating it according to their means, such as financial support.

One must note that Allah, the Exalted, listed the good actions which are between people before the good action which is between people and Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…*and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer…"*

This does not mean one does not need to establish the good deeds which are between them and Allah, the Exalted, but it means that they should not fall into a common misconception whereby they believe that as long as they establish the good deeds which are between themself and Allah, the Exalted, they are free to mistreat others and fail to fulfil their rights. The one who enters Judgement Day with this attitude has been described as the bankrupt person by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. They will be forced to hand over their good deeds to the people they wronged and if necessary they will be forced to take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may

well cause them to be hurled into Hell. Therefore, a muslim must avoid this common misconception and instead strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people according to their ability. And as Allah, the Exalted, does not entrust a person with a responsibility they cannot fulfil, they will achieve this if they genuinely try. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…[and who] establishes prayer…"

As Allah, the Exalted, mentioned that righteousness goes beyond just turning towards a particular direction during the prayer at the start of verse 177, He mentions the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers in order to make clear that His initial statement does not mean one should neglect their prayers, as it is still a vital part of righteousness and faith. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"*Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west…"*

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling them with their full conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. Establishing the obligatory prayers is often repeated in the Holy Quran as it is the most important practical proof of one's faith in Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as the daily prayers are all spread out, they act as a constant reminder of the Day of Judgement and practically preparing for it, as each stage of the obligatory prayer is connected to Judgement Day. When one stands up right, this is how they will stand in front of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verses 4-6:

"Do they not think that they will be resurrected. For a tremendous Day The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?"

When they bow, it reminds them of the many people who will be criticized on Judgement Day for not bowing to Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. Chapter 77 Al Mursalat, verse 48:

"And when it is said to them, "Bow [in prayer]," they do not bow."

This criticism also includes not practically submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of one's life. When one prostrates in the prayer, it reminds them of how people will be invited to prostrate to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. But those who did not prostrate correctly to Him

during their lives on Earth, which involves obeying Him in all aspects of their lives, will not be able to do this on Judgement Day. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verses 42-43:

"On the Day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so. Their eyes humbled, humiliation will cover them. And they used to be invited to prostration while they were sound."

When one sits on their knees in the prayer, it reminds them of how they will be sitting in this position in front of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement, fearing their final judgement. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 28:

"And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do.""

The one who prays with these elements in mind will establish their prayers correctly. This in turn will ensure they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in between the prayers. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

"…Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing…"

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…and gives zakah…"

The obligatory charity is only a tiny portion of one's overall income and is only given when one possesses a fixed amount. One of the aims of donating the obligatory charity is that it reminds a muslim that the wealth they possess does not belong to them, otherwise they would be free to spend it how they wished. The wealth was created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and therefore must be used according to His pleasure. In fact, every blessing one possesses is only a loan which must be repaid to its rightful Owner, Allah, the Exalted. This is achieved when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who fails to understand this truth and instead behaves as if the blessings they were granted, such as their wealth, belongs to them and therefore refrains from donating the obligatory charity, will face a penalty, just like the one who fails to repay a worldly loan faces a penalty. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will

encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on Judgement Day. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection…”

In this world, the very wealth they fail to donate the obligatory charity on will become a source of their stress and misery, as they failed to remember that Allah, the Exalted, has a right over the blessings He granted them. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

“…*[those who] fulfill their promise when they promise…”*

It is an aspect of hypocrisy to break one's promises without a valid reason. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749. The one who adopts the characteristics of a hypocrite must fear that they may well end up with them in the hereafter. A muslim must therefore fulfil all the promises they have made. The most important of these is the promise of sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, under every circumstance when they accepted Him as their Lord. This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is important to note that this promise is a practical one. Therefore, it goes far beyond verbally claiming faith in Allah, the Exalted. Fulfilling the promises made to people are also important as one will be held accountable for this on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 34:

"…And fulfill [every] commitment. Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one will be] questioned."

These promises include the unspoken and unwritten ones also, such as when one has a child. Having a child automatically bounds the parent to a promise of fulfilling the child's rights according to the teachings of Islam. These promises also include worldly ones, such as business transactions and financial deals. A muslim must not attempt to separate their worldly affairs from their religious affairs while believing the worldly aspects of their life has no interest to Allah, the Exalted. This is a foolish attitude as Islam is a complete way of life and code of conduct which affects every breath a person takes and every situation they are involved in, whether they appear

worldly or religious. Therefore, one must think deeply before committing to any responsibility, as all responsibilities in this world are bound by some type of promise which will be questioned about on Judgement Day.

So far in verse 177, different aspects of gratitude are listed whereby one is encouraged to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakāh; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise…"

Allah, the Exalted, then mentioned the other half which is tied with gratitude, meaning, patience. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle…"

Patience in poverty involves avoiding complaining about one's limited provision and avoiding becoming jealous over the people who have been granted more provision. One must remember that Allah, the Exalted, grants

each person what is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

“And if Allāh had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing.”

Therefore, one must accept whatever provision they have been granted believing that as long as they are alive, they are guaranteed the minimal provision to survive in this world. In fact, the provision of mankind was allocated over fifty thousand years before the creation of the Heavens and the Earth and therefore cannot be increased or decreased by anyone. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 6:

“And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allāh is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. All is in a clear register.”

Therefore, one must play their part, by striving to earn lawful provision knowing it has already been allocated and guaranteed to them, even if this is difficult to understand.

In addition, a muslim must understand that peace of mind, which is arguably the greatest worldly blessing one can possess, is not obtained through possessing many worldly things. It is directly connected to using whatever blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, anyone can obtain peace of mind, irrespective of how many worldly things they possess. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Furthermore, having many worldly things usually only causes one to misuse them, which in turn leads to difficulties, trouble and stress in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, one must become content with whatever they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, and strive to obtain peace of mind by using these blessings in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"…and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship…"

The first thing to note is that patience must be shown from the very onset of a situation. Accepting an undesired outcome of a situation over time occurs with everyone, even those who are impatient. Acceptance is therefore not the same as patience. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. Therefore, one must ensure they remain patient from the very onset of a situation and maintain their patience until they leave this

world, as many people can lose the reward of patience by showing impatience at a future date.

Patience in hardship involves avoiding complaining through one's actions or words and maintaining the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in Islamic teachings. Strong faith will aid one in maintaining patience in all situations and specifically, during times of hardship. Strong faith is obtained when one learns and acts on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who obtains strong faith will understand certain truths which will aid them in maintaining patience through hardships. For example, they will understand that every situation they encounter in this life is inevitable and they could have never avoided them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2516. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

"No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allāh, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you…"

The one who understands the inevitable and inescapable nature of destiny will not complain as their complaining cannot change destiny in any way. It will only remove the reward they would have obtained if they remained patient through it.

In addition, the one who possesses strong faith understands that this world is a place of tests and hardships so that those who are loyal to Allah, the Exalted, will be separated from those who are not. Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 2:

“[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is better in deed…”

Therefore, facing hardships is an inevitable and unavoidable aspect of life in this world. This acceptance will aid one in remaining patient when facing hardships.

Furthermore, the one who possesses strong faith will always remember that no matter how difficult a hardship is, they undoubtedly have the strength to face it with patience, as Allah, the Exalted, never burdens a soul with more than it can bear. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…”

This truth will always aid one in remaining patient, as patience is often lost when one believes they cannot tolerate facing a specific situation.

Another truth that the one who possesses strong faith understands is that Allah, the Exalted, decrees what is best for everyone involved, even if this is not obvious to them. As a person's knowledge is extremely limited, they cannot understand the wisdoms behind the decrees of Allah, the Exalted, whose knowledge encompasses and extends beyond all things. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

One only needs to reflect on their life to understand how true this verse is. There are many examples within each person's life when they believed something was good, only for it to become a source of stress for them and when they believed something was bad, only for it to become a source of goodness for them. Understanding this truth will also aid one in remaining patient when facing hardships.

All these and more truths unravel in the heart of a person who learns and acts on Islamic knowledge thereby obtaining certainty of faith. This in turn ensures they remain patient and obedient to Allah, the Exalted, through every situation, especially situations of hardship.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

“…and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle…”

Specifically speaking, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were repeatedly warned throughout the Holy Quran to prepare for battle against the non-muslims, as their enemies would relentlessly pursue them until Islam was destroyed even after they migrated to Medina. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 89:

“They wish you would disbelieve as they disbelieved so you would be alike...”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

“…and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle…”

Generally speaking, battle involves striving to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings, despite the fact a muslim will be relentlessly tempted to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This temptation comes from social media, culture, fashion, their desires and other people, including one's relatives. To battle all these temptations and to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, requires patience. This type of patience is arguably harder than the other types mentioned in verse 177, as it is continuous and relentless. Wherever a muslim turns they will be invited towards misusing the blessings they have been granted. In fact, in this day and age, one does not even need to leave their bedroom to face such temptations as social media is freely available and accessible. Overcoming all of these forces and remaining patient on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is possible when one obtains strong faith. Strong faith is obtained when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings. Strong faith will allow one to differentiate between the path which leads to peace of mind in both worlds and the path which leads to stress, trouble and misery in both worlds. In this case, the one who possesses strong faith will understand that if they misuse the blessings they have been granted, the very blessings they possess will become a source of stress for them, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. This truth becomes clear to the one who possesses strong faith as it has been explained in Islamic teachings and by observing the many rich and famous people who indulge in misusing the blessings they have been granted and how it leads them to stress, misery, depression, mental health issues, substance abuse and suicidal tendencies, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Conversely, the one who possesses strong faith will understand that as long as they use the blessings they have been granted correctly, they will be granted peace of mind in both worlds, irrespective of how many worldly things they possess, as this has been guaranteed by Allah, the Exalted, in Islamic teachings and there are countless examples of people who chose this way of life and obtained peace of mind through it. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

"…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Therefore, the one who possesses strong faith will understand this reality and therefore constantly battle against the temptations which encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. The person who behaves in this manner during this age of widespread turmoil, seditions and temptations will be rewarded as if they migrated to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, during his life time. This has been promised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7400.

In addition, a person can aid their efforts in battling these temptations to misuse the blessings they have been granted by minimising their interactions with the unnecessary elements of this material world. The more one minimises indulging in the unnecessary elements of this material world the easier it will be to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and to prioritise His obedience over all else. This person has been promised contentment in their life, the correction of their affairs and their provision reaching them in an easy way. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2465. Whereas, the one who over indulges in the unnecessary aspects of the material world will be less likely to use the blessings they have been granted correctly. In fact, they will be more likely to prioritize enjoying the material world over sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. The same Hadith quoted earlier warns this type of person of a lack of contentment, no correction of their affairs and their guaranteed provision will reach them with great difficulty. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

“*…and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle…”*

Those who strive to act on the different aspects of faith and righteousness mentioned in verse 177 have been true to their word when they testified to Islam as their faith. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

“*Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true…”*

This verse therefore indicates the importance of actualizing one’s faith as a verbal declaration of faith in Islam is not good enough if it is not supported by actions. Actions are the proof and the currency one needs in order to obtain the peace of mind and success in both worlds which have been guaranteed to the righteous, to those who use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

“…*Those are the ones who have been true and it is those who are the righteous.”*

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But those who fail to use the blessings they have been granted correctly, even if they verbally claim faith in Islam, will find that the very blessings they possess will become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, the one who fails to actualise their faith must fear that they may well leave this world without it. This is because faith is like a plant which must be nourished with good actions. Just like a plant which fails to obtain nourishment, such as sunlight, will die, so may well the faith of a person who fails to perform good deeds. This is the greatest loss.

One must therefore be true to their word when they declared Islam as their faith by acting on its teachings, if they desire peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 177:

"*Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their promise when they promise; and [those who] are patient in poverty*

and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 178-179

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْقِصَاصُ فِى ٱلْقَتْلَى ۖ ٱلْحُرُّ بِٱلْحُرِّ وَٱلْعَبْدُ بِٱلْعَبْدِ وَٱلْأُنثَىٰ بِٱلْأُنثَىٰ ۚ
فَمَنْ عُفِىَ لَهُۥ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَىْءٌ فَٱتِّبَاعٌۢ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَآءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَٰنٍ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَرَحْمَةٌ ۗ فَمَنِ ٱعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَلَهُۥ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾

وَلَكُمْ فِى ٱلْقِصَاصِ حَيَوٰةٌ يَٰٓأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

“O you who have believed, prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But whoever overlooks from his brother [the killer] anything, then there should be a suitable follow-up and payment to him [the deceased's heir or legal representative] with good conduct. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy. But whoever transgresses after that will have a painful punishment.

And there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding, that you may become righteous.”

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 178:

"O you who have believed, prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered…"

The first thing to note is that true muslims respect all forms of life. In fact, a muslim has been commanded to show mercy to all others, as this will ensure they receive mercy from Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4941. Chapter 28 Al Qasas, verse 77:

"…And do good as Allāh has done good to you…"

This kind treatment must be extended to all beings, including animals. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2550. No other religion places such value on human life, as Islam does. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that the killing of one innocent person will be judged as if the entire mankind was killed. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 32:

“…kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land - it is as if he had slain mankind entirely. And whoever saves one - it is as if he had saved mankind entirely…”

The very definition of a muslim and a believer given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, makes it crystal clear that Islam teaches one to keep their harm away from others. This Hadith advises that a muslim and a believer is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others and what they possess.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never harmed another person or creature unless it was in self-defence against a male soldier during a battle. He never harmed a woman, the elderly, a child or a non-soldier. In fact, he never took revenge for himself and only applied the punishment decreed by Allah, the Exalted, as the head of state to those who crossed the limits set by Allah, the Exalted, and were found guilty through irrefutable evidence. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6050. This is how Muslims must behave under all circumstances if they claim to be the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

As Islam is the perfectly balanced and realistic religion and way of life, a Muslim has been granted permission to defend themself, their families and possessions. But this self-defence must be within defined limits. Muslims do

not have permission to attack others first and to harm innocent people. Muslims should therefore act on the teachings of Islam in respect to how they treat others, which can be summarised by treating others how they themselves wish to be treated by people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 178:

"*O you who have believed, prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female…"*

Prior to the advent of Islam, a person who committed murder could force someone else to be punished in their place, such as a slave they owned. But Islam makes it clear that the one who commits murder will face the consequences of their crime and it cannot be transferred to another. The free person who commits murder will be the one who faces the consequences, meaning, the free for the free. The slave who commits murder will be the one who faces the consequences of their action, meaning, the slave for the slave. And the female who commits murder will be the one who faces the consequences of her action, meaning, the female for the female.

Generally speaking, this principle applies in all cases. Meaning, a person will not be able to shift facing the consequences of their sins to another. In fact, the number one culprit people blame even now is the Devil but he will

announce on Judgement Day that as he never physically forced anyone to commit sins, they should blame themselves and not him. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 22:

“And Satan will say when the matter has been concluded, "Indeed, Allah had promised you the promise of truth. And I promised you, but I betrayed you. But I had no authority over you except that I invited you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me; but blame yourselves…”

If one will not be able to shift the blame of their sins to the Devil, the main inciter to evil, then how can they believe they will be able to shift the blame of their sins to someone else? This is a foolish attitude which only encourages one to commit more sins and must therefore be abandoned. Each person will be responsible for their own intentions, speech and actions and this is unavoidable. Therefore, one must constantly assess their intentions, speech and actions so that they prepare adequately for their inevitable and inescapable accountability on the Day of Judgement.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 178:

“…*prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But whoever overlooks from his brother [the killer] anything, then there should be a*

suitable follow-up and payment to him [the deceased's heir or legal representative] with good conduct…"

Allah, the Exalted, always encourages kind and merciful conduct between people and only advises harsher treatment in extreme cases and in matters of self-defense. In this case, Allah, the Exalted, encourages the heir of the murdered to forgive the murderer as it describes the murderer as their brother in faith and, or lineage, as all people are related through the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, and his wife, Hawa, may Allah be pleased with her. As discussed earlier, the main attitude and behaviour of a muslim must be mercy and kindness to others as this leads to gaining the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4941. For this act of forgiveness, the murderer should give a compensatory fee to the heir of the murdered person, unless they willingly wave this as an act of charity on their part, which again leads to further reward and blessings for them in both worlds. The good conduct mentioned in this verse refers to both parties swiftly fulfilling the legal agreement made and dealing with each other with mercy or at least avoiding any ill treatment of each other from then on.

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of adopting a neutral stance towards others, especially when one does not get on with them due to a difference in characteristics and behaviour, instead of adopting a negative stance towards others. If a muslim cannot act in a positive way towards others because of some prior issues between them, then the least they can do is adopt a neutral stance towards them whereby they do not show positive feelings towards them but nor do they show negative feelings towards them either. The higher level, which leads to more reward, is to adopt a positive attitude to others, even when they have had issues in the

past with them, but this is recommended not obligatory. In addition, it is important to note that this does not mean one must not change the abusive and dangerous situation they are involved in, as Islam does not advocate this at all. A muslim must take steps to change their situation and circumstances in order to protect themself and others from physical and verbal abuse but after doing so they should strive to adopt a positive attitude towards the person they had issues with in the past and then move on with their own life with a clear mind. For example, a woman being physically and verbally abused by her husband must take steps to protect herself and her children from him, even if this means separating from him, as Islam does not advise to tolerate this kind of behaviour at all. But once this wife changes her living arrangements so that she and her children are safe, then she should strive to forgive her former husband and move on with her life with a clear mind.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 178:

"…*prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But whoever overlooks from his brother [the killer] anything, then there should be a suitable follow-up and payment to him [the deceased's heir or legal representative] with good conduct. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy…"*

Allah, the Exalted, granted the heir of the murdered person the choice of legal retribution, which can only be carried out by the government and under strict guidelines, or the option of forgiveness with or without a compensation

fee paid by the murderer. The option to choose between the two was a mercy from Allah, the Exalted, as forcing one or the other option upon people would have caused difficulties for them, as all people are different. Those who possess a natural merciful demeanor would incline towards forgiveness and would therefore find it difficult to order the execution of the murderer, if Islam forced this option on them. On the other hand, others would find it extremely difficult to forgive the murderer of their beloved and could not live with the reality of the murderer of their beloved walking around in society as a free person while their beloved's life was taken from them, especially when the murdered person had dependents who heavily relied on them. The one with this attitude would find it hard to forgive and pardon the murderer if this option was forced upon them by Islam. As a mercy to all people, Allah, the Exalted, left the option to the heir of the murdered person. Unlike, most legal constitutions in this day and age, which leaves the fate of the murderer in the hands of a court judge or a jury compromising of complete strangers. This broken system prevents the heir from finding some peace of mind which is obtained when they are granted the option to choose the fate of the murderer and put the matter to rest so that they can move on with their lives. This broken system is the reason why the family of the murdered person or in crimes other than murder, such as rapes, the victim themself with their family often complain that justice was not served, even when the criminal is sentenced to prison, as their prison sentence does not befit the crime. Meaning, the criminal will be released in a few years and return to their normal life, where they are provided benefits from the government while the victim and the victim's family are psychologically scarred for life. The only thing that can somewhat alleviate this psychological trauma is if the family is granted the power to choose what happens to the criminal.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 178:

“…*prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But whoever overlooks from his brother [the killer] anything, then there should be a suitable follow-up and payment to him [the deceased's heir or legal representative] with good conduct. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy. But whoever transgresses after that will have a painful punishment.”*

The transgression refers to the relatives of the deceased taking revenge directly, as only the government can implement legal punishment, or taking revenge after a deal for compensation or forgiveness has been agreed upon. It also includes the murderer killing again after they were pardoned the first time. In this case, the legal judge will issue the command for their execution, even if the heir of the second murdered person agrees to forgiveness. This therefore closes any loopholes a criminal can use in order to escape justice.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 178-179:

“*…prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But whoever overlooks from his brother [the killer] anything, then there should be a suitable follow-up and payment to him [the deceased's heir or legal representative] with good conduct. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy. But whoever transgresses after that will have a painful punishment. And there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding…”*

In legal retribution there is life, as many murderers are not deterred from this behaviour by any punishment less than execution. There have been countless examples where a murderer has served some years in prison for their crime, only to commit murder again after being released. So the execution of one person leads to saving the lives of others.

In addition, as discussed earlier, this legal retribution also aids the mental state of the victim's relatives as knowing the murder has paid for their crime with their life is a way of helping the victim's relatives move on with their lives. But when the murderer is only put in prison, and in many cases is eventually released, the distress of remembering the trauma their beloved suffered at the hands of the murderer can prevent the victim's relatives from moving on with their lives and living in peace. Preventing this mental torture is giving life to them. Similarly, When the government makes a decision regarding an offender, the victim's relatives often feel that justice was not served. This is one of the reasons why, in cases of intentional murder, the victim's relatives are given the choice to either execute the killer or pardon them with or without financial compensation. When the decision is handed over to the victim's relatives it will reduce the chance of mental stress which would be caused if the government decided the outcome. This again allows the victim's relatives to move on with their lives instead of living a life full of resentment, which in reality is not living at all. This resentment can be so powerful that it even leads to friction within the victim's family, when the members have differing opinions on how to move on with their lives. This always leads to broken families, such as parents of the deceased getting divorced. So giving the family the choice of deciding what occurs with the murderer, prevents the destruction of the victim's family who are more likely to move on with their lives if the outcome of the murderer is left to them to decide.

Legal retribution by execution also saves lives by preventing revenge killings which can span generations. Therefore, executing one murderer prevents many killings. In addition, when a person who has dependents is killed, due to revenge killings, it leads to destruction of the lives of their dependents, such as their children. This can be prevented when the victim's family is given the choice of what occurs to the murderer, as this prevents revenge killings and the destruction it causes to the dependents of all those who are killed or injured. Therefore, legal retribution saves the lives of all these people.

It is important to note, that these are all true when Islamic law in legal cases are followed and applied correctly. Convicting someone for murder requires genuine and strong evidence, which must be beyond all reasonable doubt. In Islam, any doubts within the case causes the full legal punishment, such as execution, to be waived. In addition, irrefutable proof is easier to obtain in this day and age where CCTV footage, DNA testing and other scientific procedures have been produced which can correctly convict offenders to a very high degree of certainty. All this minimizes the chance of convicting an innocent person. Even if non-Islamic countries enforced legal retribution correctly in only these certain cases it would reduce crime significantly. In these cases, the excuse of avoiding execution out of fear of executing an innocent person does not apply as there is no doubt the correct person has been executed.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 178-179:

“*…prescribed for you is legal retribution for those murdered - the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But whoever overlooks from his brother [the killer] anything, then there should be a suitable follow-up and payment to him [the deceased's heir or legal representative] with good conduct. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy. But whoever transgresses after that will have a painful punishment. And there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding…”*

But as indicated by these verses, only those who apply their thinking correctly will understand the widespread benefit of legal retribution. For example, the one who lacks understanding will refuse to amputate a body part in order to save their life, as they only concentrate on one aspect of this statement, meaning, amputating a body part. They do not reflect on the bigger picture meaning, saving their life, and as a result they refuse to amputate a body part in order to save their life. Whereas, the one who thinks clearly will agree that amputating a body part is very serious but leaving it will lead to something worse namely, death. So they reflect on the bigger picture and decide in favor of amputating a body part in order to save their life. This can be applied to the verses under discussion also. Executing a member of society for murder sounds harsh but if it leads to many benefits for the rest of society, including the victim’s relatives, then it is the right thing to do, as a government must consider the bigger picture meaning, the wellbeing of the entire society over the life of a convicted murderer, who gave up their human rights when they stopped acting like a human, or in very rare cases, the single life of a wrongly convicted person.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 179:

“*And there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding, that you may become righteous.*”

As indicted by the last part of this verse, legal retribution by execution also acts as a strong deterrent for the general public. When they witness murderers being executed it will prevent those who desire to harm or kill someone to withhold their hand out of fear of losing their own life thereby giving life to themself and others. This can apply to all types of crimes. If the punishment for crimes, such as rape, was more serious, it would deter many potential offenders from committing crimes. Having soft laws is one of the main reasons why crime rates do not decrease within societies.

An aspect of legal retribution is forgiving the killer. This act of kindness can encourage the killer to sincerely repent from their life of crime, which leads to the salvation of their own life and the protentional lives of others they would have harmed if they continued in their evil ways. In addition, it can encourage other potential victims and their relatives to forgive their oppressors also, which again leads to the saving of many lives and the spread of peace and mercy in society.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 179:

"*And there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding, that you may become righteous."*

Generally speaking, a society can only minimize crimes when these two principles are adopted by its people. The first is legal retribution meaning, a strict law which punishes crimes appropriately in order to deter potential offenders from committing crimes. Even a child can understand that a potential offender is less likely to commit a crime when the legal punishment is more serious. The softer the law, the greater chance a potential offender will commit a crime.

The other aspect is adopting the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which involves facing the consequences of their actions in the hereafter. This is because a person commits crimes and sins when they feel that they will either face no consequences for their actions, such as prison, or they will somehow escape them for example, by fleeing the country. But the person who truly believes that no matter what action they perform, whether open or secret, large or small, and no matter what they do in order to avoid facing the consequences in this world, a day will certainly come where they will be held accountable for all their deeds, they will always think twice before committing a crime or a sin. If this belief is strengthened through gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge it will prevent one from committing crimes and sins. If the members of a society acted in this way, peace and justice would spread across society. The crime rate would decrease and the times would closely match the times when Islamic law was implemented correctly within society. This fact alone indicates the importance of faith and strengthening it through gaining and acting on knowledge within society. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 90:

“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving [help] to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 180-182

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ ٱلْمَوْتُ إِن تَرَكَ خَيْرًا ٱلْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ وَٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ
بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾

فَمَنۢ بَدَّلَهُۥ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُۥ فَإِنَّمَآ إِثْمُهُۥ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨١﴾

فَمَنْ خَافَ مِن مُّوصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ إِثْمًا فَأَصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَآ إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٨٢﴾

"Prescribed for you when death approaches [any] one of you if he leaves good [is that he should make] a bequest for the parents and near relatives according to what is acceptable - a duty upon the righteous.

Then whoever alters it [i.e., the bequest] after he has heard it - the sin is only upon those who have altered it. Indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing.

But if one fears from the bequeather [some] error or sin and corrects that which is between them [i.e., the concerned parties], there is no sin upon him. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

Islam encourages muslims to constantly remember their mortality and their inescapable journey to the hereafter, where they will be held accountable for their intentions, speech and actions. This constant reminder is important so that people constantly prepare for their death and journey to the hereafter and their accountability on Judgement Day. This practical preparation involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An aspect of this practical preparation is leaving good behind in this world, so that others, especially their dependents, can benefit from it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 180:

"Prescribed for you when death approaches [any] one of you if he leaves good…"

Generally speaking, a muslim must strive to leave good behind in this world, as this will benefit them in both worlds, as it is considered a good deed. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1376, that three things continue to benefit a muslim even after their death, namely, ongoing charity, which are things which continue to benefit people, such as a water well, useful knowledge that they leave behind or a righteous child who supplicates on behalf of their deceased parent. This is the legacy a muslim must strive to leave behind in this world, as all worldly legacies fade away with the passing of time and will not benefit its founder in any way, especially, on Judgement Day.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 180:

“Prescribed for you when death approaches [any] one of you if he leaves good [is that he should make] a bequest for the parents and near relatives according to what is acceptable…”

The good mentioned in this verse refers to wealth and other things which others can benefit from, such as a home. It was and still is common practice to wrong others by creating wills which aim to remove certain people, especially relatives, from being an heir. So Allah, the Exalted, corrects this wrong attitude many times in the Holy Quran by allocating the exact shares the heirs of the deceased gets. The main verses under discussion were initially revealed and more specific and detailed verses regarding inheritance were revealed afterwards, which further clarified the exact shares the inheritors receive. It is important to understand that as people are biased, they will not be able to distribute their inheritance in a fair manner. The only One who can fairly distribute blessings while knowing what is best for each person is Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as all the worldly blessings a person possesses, such as wealth, has been created and granted by none other than Allah, the Exalted, He alone has the right to choose who inherits from a person and what their share should be. Therefore, a person has no right to question the inheritance procedure set by Islam, as the worldly things they possess do not belong to them.

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of fulfilling the rights of others. Both aspects of Islam must be fulfilled in order to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. The first aspect is fulfilling the rights of

Allah, the Exalted, such as the five daily obligatory prayers. The second aspect is fulfilling the rights of people, such as ensuring one's inheritance is distributed according to Islamic law to their best of their ability. Sadly, it is common practice for many muslims to strive in fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, while neglecting the rights of people, believing they will achieve success in this manner as they wrongfully believe Allah, the Exalted, does not care about the rights of others. All muslims should know that on Judgement Day justice will be established. A person will be forced to hand of their good deeds to all those they had wronged in the world and if necessary, they will be forced to take the sins of those who they wronged. This may cause them to be hurled into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Therefore, one must strive to fulfil the rights of people, just like they must strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted. The former is best achieved when one treats others in a way they themself desire to be treated by people. This involves aiding others in things which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and warning them against the things which are displeasing to Allah, the Exalted, as the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, must be prioritized over all other things, people and relationships.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 180:

"Prescribed for you when death approaches [any] one of you if he leaves good [is that he should make] a bequest for the parents and near relatives according to what is acceptable…"

This verse refers to wealth as good. This indicates that wealth and most of the worldly things, such as social influence and authority, are not bad things. It is how one uses them which determines whether they become a good thing for them in both worlds or a bad thing for them. For example, if one organizes their inheritance correctly, then this becomes a good deed, even though it involves worldly things, such as wealth. A muslim must therefore strive to make all the worldly things they have been granted into a source of goodness for them in both worlds by using them correctly. This is achieved when they use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure the worldly blessings they have been granted become a source of peace of mind for them in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who misuses the worldly blessings they have been granted will ensure they become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them in both worlds, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls all their affairs and their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

As indicated in the last part of verse 180, only those who fear Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability on Judgement Day will strive to fulfil both the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 180:

“Prescribed for you when death approaches [any] one of you if he leaves good [is that he should make] a bequest for the parents and near relatives according to what is acceptable - a duty upon the righteous.”

This makes it clear that righteousness, piety and fearing Allah, the Exalted, is directly connected to fulfilling the rights of others, just like it is connected to fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted. Only those who desire destruction for themselves in both worlds will try to separate the two.

Allah, the Exalted, then warns the executor of the will to adhere strictly to what has been advised by the deceased and not to alter the will in anyway thereby depriving the inheritors of their rights. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 181:

“Then whoever alters it [i.e., the bequest] after he has heard it - the sin is only upon those who have altered it…”

Sadly, this is and was a common practice amongst people, who would bribe the executor of the will in order to increase their share of the inheritance or reduce the share of others. Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of avoiding influencing others in the incorrect way as this leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and the spread of corruption within society. Even today, the major cause of corruption within the world is due to the negative influence people, companies and organsations have on other members of society, such as politicians. A muslim must never follow in their footsteps while fooling themself that it is an acceptable attitude to adopt as others do the same. This is a foolish and misguided attitude as it will never be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Instead, one must strive to influence others in a positive way, which in turn leads to the spread of good within society, this in turn will become a source of good deeds for the influencer. Whichever attitude a person decides to adopt, whether to influence others in a good or negative way, they will be held accountable by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds, as He knows, sees and listens to what they are doing. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 181:

“Then whoever alters it [i.e., the bequest] after he has heard it - the sin is only upon those who have altered it. Indeed, Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.”

In addition, a person must never be persuaded into disobeying Allah, the Exalted. Instead, they must prioritize the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, over all other things. They must remember that compromising on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, for worldly gain, such as wealth obtained through bribes, will only become a source of stress, trouble and difficulties for them in both worlds, even if this is not obvious to them, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls their affairs and the affairs of all others. In fact, the very people they aim to please by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, will eventually become their critics and enemies in this world. Therefore, they will gain nothing good from behaving in this manner. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind

while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whereas, the one who remains firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will be granted peace of mind and success in both worlds and protected from the negative influence of the people they disobeyed, even if this protection is not obvious to them. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Allah, the Exalted, then addresses another possible situation that may occur with respect to the execution of the will. Chapter 2, verse 182:

"*But if one fears from the bequeather [some] error or sin and corrects that which is between them [i.e., the concerned parties], there is no sin upon him…"*

The first thing to note is that Allah, the Exalted, first gave the benefit of the doubt to the deceased by indicating an error on their part when making the

will then mentioned the chance of them creating an unfair will intentionally. This indicates the importance of giving the benefit of the doubt to others before assuming the worse about them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4993, that thinking about others in a positive way is an aspect of worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly. Meaning, it is an aspect of obeying Him. A muslim must avoid assumptions as they often result in sins, such as backbiting, slander and breaking ties with others. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

"O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin…"

Instead, a muslim must interpret the words and actions of others in a positive way unless there is clear evidence to suggest otherwise. This does not mean a muslim must be naïve and gullible, as they must enter every situation with caution, such as business transactions, but at the same they must not assume the worse of other people without evidence. Assuming negatively about others also leads to fractured and broken relationships, as socializing and fulfilling the rights of people becomes difficult in these cases. It becomes difficult for those who assume negative things about others and those who deal with people who behave in this manner.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 182:

“*But if one fears from the bequeather [some] error or sin and corrects that which is between them [i.e., the concerned parties], there is no sin upon him…”*

The executor of the will and those involved must correct any errors, which challenge Islamic law, within the will. They do not have the right to alter anything else within the will, even if it contradicts their personal opinions. As discussed earlier, they should correct the errors with a positive attitude assuming an error was made on the part of the deceased instead of an intentional sin. Covering the faults of others in this way leads to Allah, the Exalted, covering their faults in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853. In addition, the heirs must strive to forgive any errors made by the deceased for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, hoping He will forgive them for their mistakes and sins also. This has been indicated at the end of verse 182. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 182:

“…*Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”*

And chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 183-185

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ كُتِبَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ
تَتَّقُونَ ١٨٣

أَيَّامٗا مَّعۡدُودَٰتٖۚ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوۡ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٖ فَعِدَّةٞ مِّنۡ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَۚ وَعَلَى
ٱلَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُۥ فِدۡيَةٞ طَعَامُ مِسۡكِينٖۖ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيۡرٗا فَهُوَ خَيۡرٞ لَّهُۥۚ وَأَن تَصُومُواْ خَيۡرٞ
لَّكُمۡ إِن كُنتُمۡ تَعۡلَمُونَ ١٨٤

"O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.

[Fasting for] a limited number of days. So whoever among you is ill or on a journey [during them] - then an equal number of other days [are to be made up]. And upon those who are able [to fast, but with hardship] - a ransom [as substitute] of feeding a poor person [each day]. And whoever volunteers good [i.e., excess] - it is better for him. But to fast is best for you, if you only knew.

The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights [the crescent of] the month, let him fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days. Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and [wants] for you to complete the period and to magnify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful."

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

"*O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting…"*

Fasting is a very unique righteous deed as it is hidden from the sight of others and occurs throughout the day, unlike other hidden actions. A person must therefore strive to keep their fasting a secret to the best of their ability and avoid spoiling their reward by informing others unless they are forced to. This is arguably the reason why Allah, the Exalted, states in a divine Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 2219, that fasting is especially for Him therefore, He will reward it directly. This direct reward good mean that He is the reward of the fasting person, meaning, the person who fasts regularly will be granted the opportunity of observing Allah, the Exalted, in the hereafter, which is a reward which has no equal or limit in its greatness.

Fasting places a lock on every aspect of a person and therefore the one who fasts correctly will avoid all types of verbal and physical sins and vain things. A muslim must therefore strive to apply extra control over their intention, speech and actions when they are fasting, as the one who persists on sins, such as lying, when they are fasting has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 707, of destroying their fast so that it becomes insignificant to Allah, the Exalted. In fact, another Hadith found in Sunan Ibn

Majah, number 1690, warns that some people achieve nothing from the fasting except hunger and thirst.

One of the purposes of fasting is that the cautious attitude a person adopts while fasting is carried over to the days when they are not fasting, so that they avoid sins and vain things and instead remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to the righteousness indicated in the main verses under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

"*O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous."*

In addition, fasting reduces one's evil desires. It prevents pride and the encouragement of sins through hunger, thirst and the greater effort in avoiding sins a fasting person commits to. Fasting hinders the appetite of the stomach and carnal desires. These two things often lead to many other sins. The desire for fulfilling these two desires is often greater than the desire for other unlawful things. Therefore, whoever controls them through fasting will find it easier to control the weaker evil desires. This leads to true righteousness.

A muslim must therefore strive to obtain the highest level of fasting and fulfill its purpose so that they control their intention, speech and actions so that they remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and avoid all sins and vain things even when they are not fasting.

Finally, fasting the obligatory fasts is so important and valuable that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 723, that if a person missed a single obligatory fast without a valid reason, they will not be able to make up for it in reward even if they fasted every day for the rest of their life. Therefore, muslims must strive to the best of their ability to fulfil their obligatory fasts correctly and perform voluntary fasts according to their strength and ability.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

"*O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous."*

In addition, this verse is another proof amongst countless found within the Holy Quran that makes it clear that one cannot become righteous until they actualize their faith through performing good deeds, such as fasting. Righteousness is like a plant which has blossomed to produce delicious fruits. Just like a plant cannot blossom without obtaining nourishment, such as sunlight, neither can the faith of a person blossom so that they obtain

righteousness without nourishment in the form of good deeds. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. In fact, the one who only verbally claims faith in Islam and fails to support their claim with physical actions must fear losing their faith. Just like the plant which fails to obtain nourishment eventually dies, so may well their faith if they fail to nourish it with good actions.

In order to minimize the difficulty of this duty, Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that the previous nations were also commanded to fast. This reminds muslims that they have not been given any difficult or heavy responsibilities which the people before them did not bear. In fact, Allah, the Exalted, has confirmed, in many places of the Holy Quran, that He never burdens any person with anything, such as a responsibility, which they cannot bear. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…"

Bearing this reality in mind will make fulfilling the responsibilities of Islam easier for a muslim, as some of them can contradict the desires of people. A person must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them and knowing they can handle the treatment plan given to them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will achieve peace of mind and body through accepting and acting on the medical advice of their doctor so will the person who accepts and fulfills the responsibilities entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, further minimizes the difficulty attached to fasting by reminding people that it is only for a few days in the year. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 184:

"*[Fasting for] a limited number of days…"*

As per usual, Allah, the Exalted, grants concessions for those unable to fulfil this obligatory duty, as He does for all other duties, as Islam is a religion and way of life which is tailor made for the nature of humans and therefore respects their limitations and weaknesses. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 184:

"…*So whoever among you is ill or on a journey [during them] - then an equal number of other days [are to be made up]. And upon those who are able [to fast, but with hardship] - a ransom [as substitute] of feeding a poor person [each day]…"*

In every circumstance, Islam encourages people to aid the needy. In some cases, helping them is obligatory, in others it is a penalty or a ransom and in other circumstances it is a voluntary good deed which is highly rewarded. This highlights the importance of helping others, especially the needy. Islam does not preach a selfish way of life whereby one only cares about themself

and their family, as even animals behave in this manner. Instead, Islam invites people to rise above this and aid all others, according to their means, which includes financial, physical and emotional support of others. The truth is that if each muslim truly acted on this fundamental principle of Islam then they would be no needy person left on this Earth. This important principle has been indicated in the next part of verse 184. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 184:

"…*And whoever volunteers good [i.e., excess] - it is better for him…"*

Allah, the Exalted, reminds people of the simple fact that aiding others is in reality aiding oneself, as it leads them to obtaining peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 7:

"[And said], "If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, [you do it] to them [i.e., yourselves]."…"

For example, as long as one is busy helping others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, Allah, the Exalted, will continue to support them in all their affairs. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853. The one who has the support of Allah, the Exalted, will obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Understanding this reality will also prevent one from behaving as if they are doing Allah, the Exalted, or the needy a favour when they aid them, as this leads to the destruction of their reward through pride.

Therefore, a person must strive to aid others according to their means, for their own sake.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 184:

"…*And whoever volunteers good [i.e., excess] - it is better for him…"*

This also highlights the important Islamic principle of what a person gives is what they shall receive from Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, a person is rewarded according to their efforts. If they put in minimal effort in pleasing Allah, the Exalted, such as only performing the basic obligatory duties, which takes less than an hour of a day to perform, then they will receive reward and blessings in both worlds accordingly. It is strange how muslims desire the highest level of blessings and reward in both worlds yet at best only put in the minimal effort into pleasing Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, one must reflect on their efforts in pleasing Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings, and increase their efforts if they desire a greater level of reward and blessings, which in turn increases their peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 15-16:

"…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them

out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path.”

After granting concessions, Allah, the Exalted, often calls people towards the higher level by pushing themselves in the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 184:

“…*So whoever among you is ill or on a journey [during them] - then an equal number of other days [are to be made up]. And upon those who are able [to fast, but with hardship] - a ransom [as substitute] of feeding a poor person [each day]. And whoever volunteers good [i.e., excess] - it is better for him. But to fast is best for you, if you only knew.”*

One must reflect on the countless cases where they pushed themselves to their limits for the sake of worldly gain, such as in sports, and apply this same attitude when obeying Allah, the Exalted. Everyone knows their potential and limits and must therefore work accordingly. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 84:

“Say, "Each works according to his manner, but your Lord is most knowing of who is best guided in way.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 184:

“…*if you only knew.”*

This statement is often repeated in different places of the Holy Quran and indicates the importance of striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that one understands the difference between the right and wrong course of action. This therefore invites people to rise above blindly imitating others and to instead act based on evidence and knowledge so that one understands the value of the deeds they perform. The one who understands the value of deeds, good and bad, is more likely to avoid sins and is more likely to perform good deeds. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 796, that if people knew the reward for attending the early morning and the late evening obligatory prayers at a Mosque with congregation, they would come to them even if they had to crawl all the way. The one who knew and believed in this Hadith with certainty would strive to attend these obligatory prayers at a Mosque, even if it causes some difficulty to them.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions the special nature of the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

“*The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran…”*

The Holy Quran was sent down from the Preserved Tablet on the Night of Power, all at once. Chapter 97 Al Qadr, verse 1:

"Indeed, We sent it [i.e., the Quran] down during the Night of Power."

It was then placed in the House of Might in the lowest Heaven. Then it was brought down to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by the Angel Jibraeel, peace be upon him, piece by piece, over 23 years. This has been mentioned in Tafsir Al Qurtubi, Volume 1, Page 472.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions some blessed qualities of the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

"The month of Ramaḍān [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'ān, a guidance for the people…"

This could mean that the Holy Quran guides people to peace of mind and success in both worlds, as long as they use the blessings they have been granted according to its teachings. But, unlike other religions and ways of life, the Holy Quran does not invite people to blindly follow it without proof and evidence of its authenticity. Instead, at every stage, whenever the Holy Quran invites people to adopt a certain good characteristic or abandon a

certain negative characteristic or to adopt a certain code of conduct, it provides clear evidence and proof demonstrating how its advice leads to success for individuals and society in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

“The month of Ramaḍān [is that] in which was revealed the Qur’ān, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance…”

It does not only guide people to peace of mind and success in both worlds but also provides clear evidence which supports its view and teachings. This is something which is unparalleled, as all other religions and ways of life demand its followers to simply trust what they advocate to be the truth, instead of reflecting on clear evidence and deducing for themselves that what they are being invited to is the truth. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 46:

“Say, "I only advise you of one [thing] - that you stand for Allāh, [seeking truth] in pairs and individually, and then give thought." …”

And chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….""

Muslims must therefore strive to follow the teachings of Islam based on the clear evidence found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they obtain certainty of faith, instead of blindly following them based on the commands and advice of other people. Certainty of faith will ensure they remain steadfast on the teachings of Islam under every circumstance, whether times of ease or difficulty, which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who possesses weak faith rooted in blindly imitating others, is less likely to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings, under every circumstance, such as times of difficulties. Deviating from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, only ever leads to trouble, stress and difficulties in both worlds, even if one experiences moments of fun and entertainment as they cannot escape the control and power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

"*The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion…"*

The Holy Quran is a criterion as it differentiates between good and bad, useful things from useless things and obtaining peace of mind from a life full of stress. No matter how advanced a society becomes, no matter how much knowledge they gain in different topics, such as the mental and physical state of humans, they will never be able to create a code of conduct which is completely suited for the nature of humans and which caters for all conditions, states and scenarios people as individuals or as a society can

face during their lives on Earth. Achieving this is simply impossible, as people are still discovering new things about specific elements of a human being, such as the purpose behind different parts of the human brain, let alone obtaining enough knowledge to create a perfect code of conduct which leads to peace of mind and justice within society. The only One who can achieve this is Allah, the Exalted, as He created all things and as His knowledge is infinite and encompasses the past, present and future. Therefore, He alone is in the right possession to grant people a code of conduct, a criterion which clearly differentiates between good and bad, useful things from useless things and obtaining peace of mind from a life full of stress. History clearly proves that when this criterion was correctly applied within the lives of people it lead to peace of mind, justice and peace spreading within the society. Therefore, people must accept the criterion granted to them knowing it is best for them, even if some of its aspects contradicts their desires. They must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

"*The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Quran, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion…"*

The expressions in the Holy Quran are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a straight forward way. Its words and verses are extremely eloquent and no other book can surpass it. The Holy Quran mentions the history of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commands every good and forbids every evil. Those which affect an individual and those which affect the entire society, so that justice, security and peace spreads throughout every home and community. The Holy Quran avoids exaggerations, lies or any falsehood, unlike poetry, stories and fables. All the verses are beneficial and can be applied practically to one's life. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran, different important lessons are highlighted. Unlike all other books, the Holy Quran does not bore a person when it is repeatedly studied. The Holy Quran provides promises and warnings and supports them with undeniable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses something which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides a simple and practical way of implementing it into one's life. It encourages people to fulfil the purpose of their creation, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, thereby ensuring they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. It makes the straight path obvious and appealing to the one who desires peace of mind and real success in both worlds. The knowledge of the Holy Quran is timeless as it can be applied to every society and age. It is a cure for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It provides the solution for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever face. One only needs to observe history and how the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly benefited from its all-encompassing and timeless teachings. Centuries have passed yet not a single letter has been changed in the Holy Quran, as Allah, the Exalted, promised to preserve it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian."

Allah, the Exalted, discussed the root problems found within a community and detailed the practical remedy for all of them. By correcting root problems, the countless branch problems which stem from them would automatically be corrected. This is how the Holy Quran addressed all the things a person and society need to succeed in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 89:

"…And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things…"

This is the greatest timeless miracle Allah, the Exalted, bestowed upon His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But only those who seek and act on the truth will benefit from it whereas those who seek their desires and cherry pick from it will only encounter loss in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

"And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss."

Allah, the Exalted, then urges fulfilling the important obligatory duty of fasting during the month of Ramadan but includes a concession for those unable to do it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

“…*So whoever sights [the crescent of] the month, let him fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days…”*

The commands, prohibitions, concessions and advice within Islam all intend to guide people to peace of mind in both worlds. They have not been given in order to make things difficult on people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

“…Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship…”

Even though one could wrongfully claim that if Allah, the Exalted, desired ease for people, He could have simply allowed them to do whatever they desired. But this would not lead to ease for people, as they lack the knowledge and foresight to determine what is good for them. They are countless examples within each person’s life where they desired something only to realize it was bad for them and when they disliked something only to realize it was good for them. The truth is that all people are like infants who desire the wrong thing at the wrong time, such as ice cream when they have a cold. Just like a good parent protects their child by denying them what they desire, Allah, the Exalted, alone knows what is best for each person and guides them to it, all they have to do is simply obey Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Another example is of a medical doctor who prescribes bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. It outwardly seems they desire difficulty for their patient but anyone with common sense will understand that they actually desire peace of mind and body for their patient, as the bitter medicines and the strict diet plan they prescribe will lead to this, if their patient accepts and acts on their advice. One only needs to observe the rich and famous who lead a life according to their desires, which causes them to misuse the blessings they have been granted and how this only leads to mental health issues, such as stress, depression and suicidal tendencies, in order to understand that peace of mind does not lie in living a life based on one's desires. As Allah, the Exalted, alone knows the human mind and body and as His knowledge encompasses all things, including the past, present and future, He alone knows what is best for each person. Chapter 42 Ash Shuraa, verse 27:

"And if Allāh had extended [excessively] provision for His servants, they would have committed tyranny throughout the earth. But He sends [it] down in an amount which He wills. Indeed He is, of His servants, Aware and Seeing."

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the universe and especially, the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind and who does not. Therefore, the one who disobeys Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted will only obtain misery, trouble and stress in both worlds.

Furthermore, the only things that have been prohibited by Allah, the Exalted, are those things where the harm they cause outweighs the benefit one can derive from them. In each case, they are many scientific and logical reasons behind the prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, such as the prohibition of alcohol.

Therefore, His commands, prohibitions, concessions and advice is what is best for each person as this alone leads to peace of mind and body in both worlds, even if this is not obvious to people due to their ignorance and short sightedness. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 157:

"Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written [i.e., described] in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and prohibits them from what is wrong and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

"…*So whoever sights [the crescent of] the month, let him fast it; and whoever is ill or on a journey - then an equal number of other days. Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship and [wants] for you to complete the period…"*

In this particular case, Allah, the Exalted, intends ease through fasting, as fasting is the spiritual and physical training muslims need in order to adopt piety, which ensures they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 183:

"*O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous."*

As discussed earlier in detail, fasting allows one to increase their control over their intention, speech and actions so that they become more established and firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, muslims go through some difficulty during their spiritual and physical training when they fast in order to gain numerous benefits, such as peace of mind and body. This is similar to an athlete who goes through countless hours of difficult exercises and a strict diet plan so that they can achieve success in their sport or similar to a student who experiences some difficulty when they spend time revising and taking exams in order to obtain a good job, which allows them to take care of their financial needs for the rest of their life.

In addition, fasting, which allows one to increase their control over their intention, speech and actions so that they remain firmer on the obedience of

Allah, the Exalted, is a means by which one shows gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, as every good thing they possess has been created and granted by none other than Him and as He alone guides them to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

"…*and to magnify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful."*

Fasting aids one in showing gratitude through their intention, by ensuring one only acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A positive sign of this attitude is that they will not expect nor hope for any compensation or gratitude from people. It is important to note that the one who acts for the sake of people will not gain reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Fasting aids one in showing gratitude through their speech, as it encourages them to either speak what is good or remain silent. And fasting aids one in showing gratitude through their actions as it encourages them to use the blessings they have been granted, such as their time and wealth, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Encompassing all aspects of gratitude leads to an increase in blessings, forgiveness, mercy and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But whereas the one who fails to show gratitude and instead misuses the blessings they have been granted will find that the very blessings they possess, such as fame and wealth, will become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you,

and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 186

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ ٱلدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا۟ لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا۟ بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ١٨٦

“And when My servants ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.”

This verse was placed after the previous verse about the month of Ramadan in order to encourage one to strive hard in obeying Allah, the Exalted, during it and maintain this obedience throughout the year. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

"The month of Ramadan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'ān, a guidance for the people and clear proofs of guidance and criterion. So whoever sights [the crescent of] the month, let him fast it… and [wants] for you to complete the period and to glorify Allāh for that [to] which He has guided you; and perhaps you will be grateful."

Behaving in this manner naturally leads one to supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, regularly, which is an act of worship which is connected to performing good deeds, such as the obligatory prayers.

The main verse, like many others, indicates the highest rank a person can reach in this world, namely, the servant of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

"*And when My servants…"*

In many occasions when Allah, the Exalted, speaks about the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, He often refers to them as His servants instead of referring to them as Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. For example, in the following verse, Allah, the Exalted, speaks about the Heavenly journey of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is an indication of his greatness, yet refers to Him as His servant. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 1:

“Exalted is He who took His Servant by night from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām to al-Masjid al-Aqṣā, whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him of Our signs. Indeed, He is the Hearing, the Seeing.”

In another example, Allah, the Exalted, refers to the teacher of the one of the greatest Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, the Holy Prophet Musa, peace be upon him, as simply a servant from amongst His servants and does not even mention the teacher’s name. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 64-65:

“[Moses] said, "That is what we were seeking." So they returned, following their footprints. And they found a servant from among Our servants to whom We had given mercy from Us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge.”

Even the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, introduced himself to the world as the servant of Allah, the Exalted, before

declaring his Prophethood and Messengership. This has been indicated in many Hadiths, such as the one found in Sahih Muslim, number 851. In fact, the essence of Prophethood and Messengership is servanthood to Allah, the Exalted.

Therefore, one must strive to become a sincere servant of Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It is important to remember that a servant understands that their duty is to always seek the pleasure of their Master, Allah, the Exalted. Their duty is not to seek their own pleasure nor the pleasure of others. They do not desire others to please them and instead encourage others to always aim to please Allah, the Exalted, just like they strive to do so, as the entire creation are the servants of Allah, the Exalted, whether willingly or unwillingly. In addition, a servant of Allah, the Exalted, accepts that everything they possess was created and granted to them by none other than their Master, Allah, the Exalted, and therefore belongs to Him, including their own life. This attitude will therefore urge them to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to the Owner of these blessings, Allah, the Exalted, which leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Furthermore, humans have been created in such a way that they must be a servant to something or someone. It is not possible for a human to not be a servant. One can behave as the servant of Allah, the Exalted, which leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds, as He alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, and He therefore decides who obtains peace of mind and who does not. In addition, serving Allah, the Exalted, leads to peace of mind and body as one will only aim to please Him during their day to day lives and pleasing One master over multiple masters is much easier, especially, when their Master is Most Merciful and only expects a little effort from His servant. Whereas, the one who rejects the servanthood of Allah, the Exalted, will inevitably become the servant of other things or people, such as their employers, like Hollywood executives, society, social media, fashion and culture. Worse than these things is when one becomes a servant of their own desires, as this is the attitude of the worse of humankind, such as rapists and murderers. This person will aim to please their masters, which will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This in turn only leads to misery, difficulties and trouble in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment as they cannot escape the power and control of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident when one observes the people who reject the servanthood of Allah, the Exalted, and how they lead miserable lives even when they possess the entire world. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, becoming the servant of people, such as one's employers or relatives, will only lead to misery as no matter how hard one tries they will never be able to please other people completely. This is an undeniable truth. As a result, this servant of people will become angry and bitter with the passing of time as their sacrifices to please people did not please them. This will only increase their stress, anxiety and troubles in both worlds.

Therefore, as being a servant is inevitable, each person should be merciful to themself and choose the servanthood of Allah, the Exalted, over servanthood to other things, as this alone leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. This servanthood involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 15-16:

"…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

"*And when My servants ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], concerning Me…"*

This verse indicates the importance of learning about the divine qualities and attributes of Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as his knowledge is derived from the Holy Quran he was granted and his traditions. This is the only way of understanding Allah, the Exalted, correctly, according to one's potential, so that one can sincerely obey Him correctly. Learning about the divine qualities and attributes of Allah, the Exalted, from alternative sources can lead one to disrespecting Allah, the Exalted, while believing they are honouring Him and can even take one towards disbelief. For example, when one ignores studying the divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they can easily adopt wishful thinking in respect to His mercy and forgiveness. This person will assume they possess hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, even though they possess only wishful thinking, which has no value in Islam. Wishful thinking is when one persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and expects to obtain the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as He is All Merciful and All Forgiving. Even though, Allah, the Exalted, is All Merciful and All Forgiving, yet to believe He will treat the doer of good and the doer of evil equally in this world and on Judgement Day is highly disrespectful as it challenges Him being All Just. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 21:

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.”

One must therefore avoid adopting the incorrect belief in respect to the divine attributes and qualities of Allah, the Exalted, by learning and acting from the correct source, which is the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

“*And when My servants ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], concerning Me…”*

In addition, this verse indicates the importance of strictly following the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which involves learning and acting on the Holy Quran and his traditions, as Allah, the Exalted, has made him the means of guidance for humanity. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

"Say, [Prophet Muḥammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins..."”

One must therefore avoid acting on other sources of religious knowledge even if it leads to good deeds, as the more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

"*And when My servants ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], concerning Me…"*

This verse also indicates the importance of striving to gain and act on Islamic knowledge. Just like people strive hard to gain worldly knowledge in order to obtain a good profession, they must also strive hard to gain and act on Islamic knowledge so that they understand and fulfil the purpose of their creation, which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship [obey] Me.”

No matter how much worldly knowledge a person obtains it will never be able to guide them through every situation, whether situations of difficulties or ease, so that they obtain peace of mind and reward in both worlds. In addition, worldly knowledge will not teach someone how to correctly use the blessings they have been granted either which is the only way to obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Therefore, worldly knowledge cannot be applied to a person’s day to day living, irrespective of how much knowledge they obtain. They must instead strive to learn and act on Islamic knowledge so they understand how to live, how to use the blessings they have been granted correctly and how to handle every situation they face so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

“*And when My servants ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], concerning Me…”*

In addition, this verse also indicates the importance of researching only useful knowledge. One must avoid studying topics within religious knowledge which will not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. A good way of judging

whether a topic of religious knowledge is relevant or not is by assessing whether that is something Allah, the Exalted, will ask them about on Judgement Day. If they will not be questioned about a particular topic in Islam, such as specific events within Islamic history, then that topic is irrelevant and should be avoided. But if a topic will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of one's neighbour, then this topic must be researched, learned and acted upon to the best of one's potential. In respect to verse 186, the divine attributes and qualities of Allah, the Exalted, must be learned and acted upon according to one's created potential, as this will encourage them to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, things which will be questioned about on Judgement Day.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

"*And when My servants ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], concerning Me - indeed I am near…"*

In order to further highlight the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, to His creation, He answers the question directly instead of through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This verse should produce both fear of and hope in Allah, the Exalted. Both are needed in order to obtain a balanced state as fear drives one away from sins and hope drives one towards performing good deeds. Fear is produced as one should understand that Allah, the Exalted, is so close to them, in a way which cannot be understood by the creation, that He is aware of all their thoughts, intentions, speech and actions, no matter how hidden they are from other people. One must therefore constantly assess their thoughts, intentions,

speech and actions in order to align them with Islamic teachings so that they derive benefit from them in both worlds. Hope is produced by the main verse, as no matter what difficult situation a person faces they must know that the One who loves and cares for them more than anyone else is close and observing their every feeling, thought and action throughout their ordeal. Just like a person becomes comfortable when they are accompanied by a beloved, they should become more comfortable knowing Allah, the Exalted, is always accompanying them and watching over them. The one who truly understands this truth will rarely feel lonely, as they know Allah, the Exalted, is with them wherever they are or whatever they are facing. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verse 4:

"…and He is with you wherever you are…"

In fact, Allah, the Exalted, is so close to every individual person that He directly responds to anyone who calls upon Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

"…*indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me…"*

But it is important to note that the response of Allah, the Exalted, is always according to His infinite knowledge and His timing and according to what is best for the person supplicating to Him. Sadly, many misunderstand the

concept of supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, and assume He does not listen nor respond to them, as they do not get exactly what they asked for according to their timetable and according to their desires and plan. Allah, the Exalted, and His infinite treasury must never be treated like a shop where one presents cash and purchases whatever they desire in a way they desire according to the timetable they desire. They must understand that as Allah, the Exalted, is Most Merciful, He responds in a way which is best for the supplicant, even if this is not obvious to them, as many times a person asks for something which is not good for them or desires something to be removed from their life, while it is good for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Due to a lack of knowledge and foresight people should adhere to general supplications for well being in both worlds and patiently accept the decrees and responses of Allah, the Exalted, knowing it is best for them, even if it is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 200-201:

"And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share. But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""

They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Just like this wise patient will obtain a healthy body and mind so will the person who accepts the response and decrees of Allah, the Exalted, patiently and maintains their sincere obedience to Him. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

"…*indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me…"*

It is interesting to note that Allah, the Exalted, did not say He responds to the muslim who calls upon Him. He instead left the door of supplication open for all, irrespective of their belief, actions and behaviour. This is an extremely unique reality, as most religions would preach that their God only responds to the one who believes in them. But the truth is, the one who sincerely calls upon Allah, the Exalted, will get a response, as Allah, the Exalted, is too shy to turn people away empty handed. This divine response to all people, irrespective of their faith, has been mentioned in other places of the Holy Quran as well, for example, chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 65:

“And when they board a ship, they supplicate Allāh, sincere to Him in religion. But when He delivers them to the land, at once they associate others with Him.”

This is connected to another subtle reality. When a person irrespective of their faith faces a problem that no other can fix, such as a medical doctor, this person often turns to God. The person does not call upon multiple Gods, only one single God, meaning, Allah, the Exalted. As they know deep inside, that He does exist and is the only One who has control over all things. This truth has been embedded in every single person and is another proof of the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted.

Therefore, all people should reflect on the main verse which indicates the divine response to all supplicants and the hidden reality discussed in order to recognize the truthfulness of Islam.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

“*And when My servants ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me…”*

This verse also indicates another extremely important reality which is often misunderstood by muslims. Sadly, some Muslims' belief in Allah, the Exalted, is similar to that of a worldly king. A worldly king cannot manage the affairs of his kingdom by himself and therefore appoints helpers, such as governors, to help him manage his kingdom. As a result of this belief, many muslims dedicate time, energy and wealth to finding spiritual people who are supposedly connected to Allah, the Exalted, in a special way, just like a governor is connected to the king in a special way. Their aim is to please the spiritual person so that they can intercede on their behalf with Allah, the Exalted, just like a governor can intercede with the king on behalf of someone who pleases the governor, with gifts and unnatural demonstrations of respect and love. These spiritual people act as gate keepers between the common masses and Allah, the Exalted, which completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. In fact, the main verse under discussion removes the greatest creation and the closest to Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds, namely, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, from the connection between a person and Allah, the Exalted, as Allah, the Exalted, answers the question directly instead of through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, never acted as a gatekeeper and instead taught and showed people the right way to obey Allah, the Exalted, and following his footsteps has been made obligatory by Allah, the Exalted, yet in order to indicate the important reality that a person does not need to please gatekeepers in order to reach Allah, the Exalted, Allah, the Exalted, responded to the question in verse 186 directly. Therefore, a muslim must learn Islamic knowledge from a qualified teacher and show them the respect they deserve but they should not believe they should worship people who appear spiritual in order to reach and please Allah, the Exalted. This is further supported by the main verse which states that Allah, the Exalted, responds to anyone who supplicates to Him, it does not state that He only responds to the supplication of people who appear spiritual. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

"…*indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me…"*

Allah, the Exalted, then states a logical fact that the one who desires Allah, the Exalted, to respond to their needs should first respond to actualizing their faith in Him, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

"…*indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience]…"*

The actualizing of one's faith practically has been further indicated in the next part of verse 186. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

"…*indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me…"*

Good actions are the proof and currency one needs in order to obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Just like a plant only blossoms to produce fruits when it obtains nourishment, such as sunlight, the faith of a person can only

blossom in order to lead them to peace of mind, when they actualize their faith by performing good actions. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This reality has been indicated in the next part of the main verse under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

"…*indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided."*

Practically obeying Allah, the Exalted, guides one through every situation, whether times of ease or difficulty, so that they overcome them successfully while obtaining peace of mind and countless reward. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to respond to Allah, the Exalted, through practically obeying Him, may receive His response to their supplications but they will not obtain the right guidance they need to overcome every situation they face successfully, which in turn will prevent them from obtaining peace

of mind and success in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls their affairs and their spiritual hearts, the abode of peace of mind and success and therefore chooses who obtains peace of mind and who does not. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, it is important to understand that supplications will only be fully useful when one performs acts of obedience, as every supplication in the Holy Quran and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are accompanied by acts of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, as supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, while failing to obey

Him through one’s actions will not be fruitful. This has been made clear in the main verse under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

“…*indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me [by obedience] and believe in Me that they may be [rightly] guided.”*

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 187

أُحِلَّ لَكُمۡ لَيۡلَةَ ٱلصِّيَامِ ٱلرَّفَثُ إِلَىٰ نِسَآئِكُمۡ هُنَّ لِبَاسٞ لَّكُمۡ وَأَنتُمۡ لِبَاسٞ لَّهُنَّ عَلِمَ ٱللَّهُ
أَنَّكُمۡ كُنتُمۡ تَخۡتَانُونَ أَنفُسَكُمۡ فَتَابَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَعَفَا عَنكُمۡ فَٱلۡـَٰٔنَ بَٰشِرُوهُنَّ وَٱبۡتَغُواْ
مَا كَتَبَ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمۡ وَكُلُواْ وَٱشۡرَبُواْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ ٱلۡخَيۡطُ ٱلۡأَبۡيَضُ مِنَ ٱلۡخَيۡطِ ٱلۡأَسۡوَدِ مِنَ
ٱلۡفَجۡرِ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّواْ ٱلصِّيَامَ إِلَى ٱلَّيۡلِ وَلَا تُبَٰشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنتُمۡ عَٰكِفُونَ فِي ٱلۡمَسَٰجِدِ تِلۡكَ حُدُودُ
ٱللَّهِ فَلَا تَقۡرَبُوهَا كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَتَّقُونَ ١٨٧

“It has been made permissible for you the night preceding fasting to go to your wives. They are a clothing for you and you are a clothing for them. Allah knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He accepted your repentance and forgave you. So now, have relations with them and seek that which Allah has decreed for you [i.e., offspring]. And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the night [i.e., sunset]. And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship in the mosques. These are the limits [set by] Allah, so do not approach them. Thus does Allah make clear His verses [i.e., ordinances] to the people that they may become righteous.”

Initially, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not eat, drink or have relations with their wives after the late night obligatory prayer as they regarded the next day's obligatory fasting to begin after this prayer. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 1, Page 510.

Even though their initial method was not strictly ordained by Allah, the Exalted, or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they behaved in this manner. This is supported by the main verse under discussion as Allah, the Exalted, states that when some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, did not fulfil this method correctly they deceived themselves meaning, they did not cross the limits of Allah, the Exalted, but instead failed to live up to their own set routine. Allah, the Exalted, then covered them all with His forgiveness and mercy by making things easier for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 187:

"*It has been made permissible for you the night preceding fasting to go to your wives. They are a clothing for you and you are a clothing for them. Allah knows that you used to deceive yourselves, so He accepted your repentance and forgave you. So now, have relations with them and seek that which Allah has decreed for you [i.e., offspring]…"*

This indicates that a muslim must not make things difficult for themself or others as Islam is a religion of balance which advises people to perform deeds according to their strength. As Allah, the Exalted, does not ordain a duty on a person unless it is within their strength to fulfil, every person has the ability to fulfil the obligatory duties without exception. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…”

This also includes using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, such as one’s time and wealth, according to the teachings of Islam. Anything beyond this and the obligatory duties, such as voluntary acts of worship, must be carried out according to one’s strength and ability.

In addition, the main verse also indicates the importance of strictly following the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instead of other sources of religious knowledge. The more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, the harder their life will become and the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has commanded in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentioned an important characteristic of a spouse in this verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 187:

"…*They are a clothing for you and you are a clothing for them…"*

This could mean that just like clothing covers the physical defects of a person, a person is meant to cover the defects of their spouse from the rest of the world, as they are in a better position to observe their defects. These defects include physical and spiritual defects in one's character and actions. This does not mean a person must ignore the defects of their spouse as it is there duty to strive to correct their own defects and encourage their spouse to correct their defects also. But this means they should not discuss nor expose the defects of their spouse to others, such as their relatives. Sadly, this is something which is often ignored by muslims. If one seeks advice about their spouse, this should be restricted to a person who possesses Islamic knowledge and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, so that they give the appropriate advice and it ensures the defects of the spouse is not spread to other people nor are their defects mocked and ridiculed.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 187:

"…*They are a clothing for you and you are a clothing for them…"*

This could also mean that just like clothes protect a person from harm, a person must strive to protect their spouse from every type of danger, especially, the spiritual type, as spiritual dangers have more of an impact on a person's well-being in both worlds. Chapter 66 At Tahrim, verse 6:

“O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones…”

This is achieved when one strives to learn and act on Islamic knowledge so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings and when they encourage their family, such as their spouse, to do the same, as this alone leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, misusing the blessings one has been granted and encouraging one’s family to do the same, such as one’s spouse, will only lead to stress, trouble and difficulties for the entire family, in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment as they cannot escape the control and power of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident when observes the spouses that behave in this manner and how they become a source of stress for their spouse. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 187:

“…*They are a clothing for you and you are a clothing for them…”*

In addition, just like a person finds comfort in their clothes, a person should derive comfort from their spouse. Chapter 30 Ar Rum, verse 21:

“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”

If this comfort is missing from a marriage it can turn their home into a prison.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 187:

“…*They are a clothing for you and you are a clothing for them…”*

Just like clothing beautifies a person, a person is meant to beautify their spouse. This is achieved when they work as a team in striving to obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Whenever one of the pair deviates from this obedience, the other corrects them. This teamwork aids them in beautifying their good deeds, their worldly and hereafter lives, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds.

But it is important to note, that if one desires to obtain the benefits discussed so far, they must first choose the correct person to marry. This choice must be based on the teachings of Islam, as a choice based on worldly reasons will not lead to the benefits discussed. For example, in a Hadith found in

Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that a person is married for four reasons: their wealth, lineage, beauty or for their piety. He concluded by warning that a person should marry for the sake of piety otherwise they will be a loser. An aspect of this loss is a failure to achieve the benefits discussed. All the other worldly reasons mentioned in this Hadith, come and go with time and do not guarantee a person will make a good spouse nor a good parent for their future children. Whereas, piety, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, will ensure they behave in the correct way and encourage their spouse to do the same, which in turn leads to the benefits discussed and ultimately it leads to peace of mind and success for the married couple and their children. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 187:

"…*Allah knows that you used to deceive yourselves…"*

Generally speaking, this indicates that whenever one fails to behave appropriately, according to the teachings of Islam, they are only deceiving

themself. It may appear they are harming others or gaining some material benefit when they cross the limits of Allah, the Exalted, yet they should not be fooled by outward appearances as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls their affairs. The very worldly things they happen to obtain while crossing the limits of Allah, the Exalted, will become a source of stress and misery for them in both worlds, even if this is not apparent to them. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verses 55-56:

"Do they think that what We extend to them of wealth and children. Is [because] We hasten for them good things? Rather, they do not perceive."

This is quite evident when one observes the rich and famous and how the very things they obtained in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, becomes a source of stress for them. Every person, irrespective of who they are, will face the consequences of their actions in this world, even if this is not obvious to them, and all people will face the consequences of their actions in the next world in a profoundly clear way. Chapter 50 Qaf, verse 22:

"[It will be said], "You were certainly in unmindfulness of this, and We have removed from you your cover, so your sight, this Day, is sharp.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 187:

“…*so He accepted your repentance and forgave you…”*

Generally speaking, whenever one deviates away from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, it will cause them to misuse the blessings they possess, which in turn leads to difficulties for them in both worlds. In this case, one must sincerely repent and return back to the two sources of guidance if they desire to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. It is important to note that as Allah, the Exalted, controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind and who does not. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Allah, the Exalted, then briefly outlines some rules associated with fasting. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 187:

“…*And eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the black thread [of night]. Then complete the fast until the night [i.e., sunset]. And do not have relations with them as long as you are staying for worship in the mosques…”*

Allah, the Exalted, then states a vital universal principle to understand and act upon. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 187:

"…*These are the limits [set by] Allah, so do not approach them…"*

Allah, the Exalted, never said not to cross His limits, instead He made it clear people must not even approach His limits. This advice has been echoed throughout the Holy Quran. For example, Allah, the Exalted, commanded the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, not to eat from the tree in Paradise but advised him not to even approach the tree, even though approaching it was not unlawful. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 19:

"And "O Adam, dwell, you and your wife, in Paradise and eat from wherever you will but do not approach this tree, lest you be among the wrongdoers.""

There are countless examples which indicate that just because something is lawful it does not mean someone should do it, as approaching the limits of Allah, the Exalted, is not unlawful, only crossing them is unlawful. Certain lawful things, such as vain things, must be avoided as it often leads to the unlawful. For example, vain speech, which is not considered a sin, often leads to sins such as backbiting and lying. Vain spending of wealth often leads to wasteful spending, which is a sin. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful.”

The vast majority of people who have become misguided, became so through a step by step process. For example, they approached unlawful things without taking part in them and eventually, over time, were encouraged and tempted to take part in those unlawful things. For example, someone who accompanies people who drink alcohol, is more likely to eventually drink it, then the person who does not accompany people who drink alcohol. This attitude of avoiding some lawful things, especially, vain things, is something the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2451. In fact, he advised that a person cannot become pious, meaning, they cannot become steadfast on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, until they abandon some lawful things out of fear it will lead them to the unlawful. Therefore, one must give extra attention to not only avoiding unlawful things but to also avoid some lawful things, especially, vain things, out of fear it will eventually take them to the unlawful. This will ensure they remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which is the essence of righteousness and leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 187:

“…*Thus does Allah make clear His verses [i.e., ordinances] to the people that they may become righteous.”*

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to understand the importance of not approaching the limits of Allah, the Exalted, will overindulge in lawful things, especially vain things, which will only increase the chances of them committing unlawful things and it will cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn leads to stress, difficulties and trouble in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment as they cannot escape the control and power of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident if one observes the life of those who behave in this manner, such as the rich. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 188

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوٓا۟ أَمْوَٰلَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِٱلْبَٰطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا۟ بِهَآ إِلَى ٱلْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا۟ فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَٰلِ
ٱلنَّاسِ بِٱلْإِثْمِ وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].”

After discussing some duties connected directly to Allah, the Exalted, such as fasting, in the previous verses, He mentions the importance of fulfilling the rights of other people with some examples in this verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].”

This indicates the importance of understanding that Islam emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and the duties directly connected to Him, such as fasting, and fulfilling the rights of other people, such as one’s relatives. For example, a person cannot become a true muslim or believer until they keep their physical and verbal harm away from others and what they possess. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Sadly, many muslims believe that only fulfilling the duties directly connected to Allah, the Exalted, is sufficient to achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. This is one of the main reasons why people who fulfill the basic obligatory duties connected to Allah, the Exalted, such as the five daily obligatory prayers but fail to fulfil the duties connected to people, fail to obtain peace of mind as promised by Islam when one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted. It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, will easily forgive the person who sincerely repents to Him but He will not forgive the wrong done to others until the person wronged does not forgive the wrong doer themself. On Judgement Day justice will be established whereby the wrongdoer will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if needed, the wrongdoer will be forced to take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may well cause the wrongdoer to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in

Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Therefore, one must strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, as well as the rights of people as both are needed to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The rights of people are fulfilled when one treats others how they themself wish to be treated by other people. This is the characteristic of a true believer according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly…”

This involves all types of unjust business transactions whereby one cheats the person they are doing business with, whether they are the provider or the customer. It is vital for one to behave in a fair and reasonable way so that Allah, the Exalted, places blessings and mercy within their financial transactions. This will ensure their business will continue to thrive and benefit

them in both worlds. But if one intentionally cheats people in their financial transactions, such as hiding the defects of their products, then they will lose this mercy and blessings, which in turn will cause them to become greedier, as their wealth will never seem to be enough to fulfil their needs. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2079. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 2146, that all business people will be raised as immoral people on Judgement Day, unless they feared Allah, the Exalted, behaved righteously and spoke the truth during their business dealings. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verses 1-6:

“Woe to those who give less [than due]. Who, when they take a measure from people, take in full. But if they give by measure or by weight to them, they cause loss. Do they not think that they will be resurrected. For a tremendous Day. The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly…”

This also includes stealing or misusing the worldly possessions of others. As mentioned earlier, harming people and their possessions, such as their wealth, contradicts the definition of a true muslim and believer. This is

confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998. Unlawfully taking the property of others is such a serious offence in Islam that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353, that the person who intentionally takes the property of another through a legal court case will go to Hell, even if they stole something as insignificant as a twig of a tree. In fact, perjury has been labelled one of the destructive of major sins by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2654. Allah, the Exalted, has equated it to polytheism in the Holy Quran. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 30:

"…So avoid the uncleanliness of idols and avoid false statement."

It is important to understand that any wealth or other worldly things which are obtained in an unlawful way will only become a curse for its bearer as all the good actions they perform with those unlawfully acquired things will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted, and only increase their sins and punishment in both worlds, if they fail to sincerely repent. This is because the outward foundation of Islam is earning and utilizing the lawful just like the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention. If one's foundation is corrupt then anything that comes from it will be corrupt and therefore rejected by Allah, the Exalted, even if they are good deeds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly…”

In addition, the exact wording actually means do not consume your wealth unjustly. This indicates the importance of interacting with the possessions of other people as if one is interacting with their own possessions. Meaning, the same way they desire for people to respect their possessions, they in turn should respect the possessions of others. Furthermore, this verse suggests that when one misuses the possessions of others, it only invites other people to misuse their possessions and the possessions of others as well. This only leads to the spread of corruption within society as people blindly follow each other in wronging others as they believe their behaviour is justified as others are acting in the same way.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

“And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly…”

As the exact wording used in this verse actually means to not consume your possessions amongst yourselves unjustly, this verse could mean that one should not utilize their possessions, such as wealth, in ways which are disliked by Islam such as being extravagant, excessive or wasteful. It is important to understand that misusing one’s worldly things, even if they are used in vain ways, which is not considered sinful, only takes them closer to

misusing them in unlawful ways. For example, the one who spends excessively will easily become wasteful which is sinful. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 27:

“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils, and ever has Satan been to his Lord ungrateful.”

In addition, the one who misuses the worldly things they have been granted, even in vain ways, which is not considered sinful, will not obtain peace of mind, as this is only obtained when one uses the worldly things they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Perjury often goes hand in hand with bribery and is therefore warned in the next part of the main verse under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

"*And do not consume one another's wealth unjustly or send it [in bribery] to the rulers in order that [they might aid] you [to] consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know [it is unlawful].*"

The one who offers a bribe and the one who takes a bribe have been cursed by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1337. A curse removes the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, from a person, which in turn can only lead to stress, trouble and difficulties in both worlds, even if this is not obvious to the cursed person. The only time it is acceptable to offer a bribe is when one if forced to in order to reclaim their own property or guarantee their safety. In this case, the curse falls onto the one who forces others to offer them a bribe. Sadly, both perjury and bribery is a widespread problem in many muslim countries, as they underestimate its seriousness due to ignorance. As mentioned earlier, they adopt the incorrect attitude of believing they only need to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and the duties connected to Him in order to succeed in both worlds. In addition, people often take part in these major sins as they observe many others doing so. This is another poor excuse which will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Just because many others commit a sin does not give a person the justification to commit that sin also. Each person will be held accountable for their own actions and one should therefore not blindly follow others in committing sins and instead adhere to the teachings of Islam so that they correct their intention, speech and actions at all times. This will ensure they fulfill the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds and causes the spread of justice and peace within society. And it is this behaviour which is the essence of righteousness. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 188:

"*…or send it to the rulers in order that you consume a portion of the wealth of the people in sin, while you know."*

This also indicates the importance of carefully choosing who to support in matters of public interest, such as supporting politicians, in order to avoid supporting someone who takes the possessions of others unlawfully and misuses the wealth of the people. Sadly, this type of behaviour is widespread in the world and is observed in every country. Politicians misuse the wealth of people and only aim to make themselves and their allies richer while the rest of the country suffers. Muslims often have the attitude of supporting those they are connected to, such as relatives, in political matters out of blind loyalty. This completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

And the one who intentionally supports the wrong person politically, will have a share of the evil they spread within society if they are elected to a position of power within society. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 85:

“Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a share [i.e., reward] therefrom; and whoever intercedes for an evil cause will have a portion [i.e., burden] therefrom. And ever is Allāh, over all things, a Keeper.”

Even though a single muslim cannot influence the whole political constitution of a country but as indicated by the main verse under discussion, they can be careful in choosing who they support politically. A person must do their research and ensure they support others in matters of public affairs according to the best interest of the people. Only when one puts this effort to choose the correct person will they be protected from the negative effects of supporting the wrong person in both worlds. This has been indicated in the last part of verse 188.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 189

۞ يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْأَهِلَّةِ ۖ قُلْ هِىَ مَوَٰقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَٱلْحَجِّ ۗ وَلَيْسَ ٱلْبِرُّ بِأَن تَأْتُوا۟
ٱلْبُيُوتَ مِن ظُهُورِهَا وَلَـٰكِنَّ ٱلْبِرَّ مَنِ ٱتَّقَىٰ ۗ وَأْتُوا۟ ٱلْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَٰبِهَا ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٨٩﴾

“They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], about the crescent moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for the people and for ḥajj [pilgrimage]." And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed.”

The different phases of the Moon has attracted the attention of people throughout time and all kinds of fanciful ideas, superstitions and rituals have been, and are still today, associated with it. The Moon was considered the basis of good and bad omens. Certain dates were considered auspicious and others inauspicious for starting journeys, for beginning new tasks, for weddings and so on, on the ground that the rising and setting of the moon, its different phases and its eclipse affect human destiny. The Arabs too had their share of such superstitions. Therefore, some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, asked about the Moon from this superstitious point of view and Allah, the Exalted, corrected their attitude by answering them in a way which directed their minds to question things in a way which leads to benefit in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 189:

“They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], about the crescent moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for the people and for ḥajj [pilgrimage]."…”

The whole of Arabia were already aware that the Moon phases were used to calculate time, meaning, the days of the month and especially, to determine the pilgrimage season. The pilgrimage was still practiced since the time of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and before the coming of Islam but its practices had been corrupted by people. Allah, the Exalted, gave them an obvious answer in order to direct their intuitive minds into the right direction, in things which derived benefit for them and others in both worlds, instead of wasting time on pointless things, such as superstitious things. This is further supported by the end of the main verse whereby Allah, the Exalted, directly criticized a superstitious practice which was commonly observed. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 189:

“…*And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back…”*

Generally speaking, the first part of the main verse indicates that one must avoid studying topics within religious knowledge which will not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. A good way of judging whether a topic of religious knowledge is relevant or not is by assessing whether that is something Allah, the Exalted, will ask them about on Judgement Day. If they will not be questioned about a particular topic in Islam, such as superstitious things, then that topic is irrelevant and should be avoided. But if a topic will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of one’s neighbour, then this topic must be researched, learned and acted upon to the best of one’s potential.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 189:

“They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], about the crescent moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for the people…"”

As indicated by the main verse under discussion, as people’s time in this world is very limited, they must dedicate their time and other resources to the things which will benefit them in both worlds, such as researching things

which are useful. The one who fails to appreciate the speed of time will fail to make correct use of it and they will instead adopt the habit of delaying using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This will only prevent them from obtaining peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 89 Al Fajar, verses 23-24:

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life."”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 189:

“They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], about the crescent moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for the people and for ḥajj [pilgrimage]."…”

In addition, Allah, the Exalted, directed their minds to understanding the importance of asking relevant questions in a gentle manner. This indicates the importance of advising others in a gentle manner, as doing so in a harsh manner can often prevent one from acting on the good advice. Sadly, many muslims feel the urge to spread Islamic knowledge to others but do so in a harsh manner, which contradicts the tradition of Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and as a result they only push people further away from practicing Islam correctly. This is one of the reasons why

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2701, that Allah, the Exalted, loves gentleness in all matters. In respect to advising others about Islam, one must combine gentle behaviour with authentic Islamic knowledge as both are needed to guide others correctly.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates the importance of strictly adhering to the teachings of the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instead of following superstitious practices or other sources of religious knowledge, as behaving in this correct manner is the essence of righteousness. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 189:

"…And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allāh. And enter houses from their doors…"

When people entered the state of a pilgrim they would avoid entering their homes from the front door as they saw this as a bad omen. Instead they would enter their homes from the back. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1803.

As indicated by the end of verse 189, adhering to the two sources of guidance will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways

pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leas to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 189:

“…And fear Allāh that you may succeed.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The truth is that the more one follows other practices, the less they will follow the two sources of guidance, this in turn will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 189:

“…And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allāh. And enter houses from their doors…”

Generally speaking, superstitious practices and beliefs must be avoided as they encourage one towards believing in things which contradict Islamic teachings, such as the ability of people to control destiny. The deeper one dives in this attitude the closer they will come to losing their faith, as they will be encouraged to perform rituals and believe things which, in some cases, are clear acts of disbelief. For example, a person will end up placing more trust in an object then Allah, the Exalted. They will assume the object is the source of their protection and without it they will not be protected from evil things. Even if a muslim verbally opposes this concept yet their behaviour will clearly show they believe in it. This and similar things weakens a person’s faith and may well cause them to lose it entirely, without them even realizing. Superstitious practices and beliefs even encourages one to become highly paranoid towards others, which only prevents them from fulfilling the rights of others according to the teachings of Islam. Furthermore, this behaviour opens the door to con artists who pretend to be spiritual healers who claim to fix their problems for a fee. Acting on their advice only causes one to contradict the teachings of Islam, which leads to further stress and trouble in both worlds.

In order to avoid these and other negative things one must learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they strengthen their faith. Strong faith will prevent one from being influenced by superstitious things and beliefs. For example, the one who has strong faith understands that nothing occurs

within the universe without the will of Allah, the Exalted, and if He chooses for one to experience an uncomfortable situation, nothing or no one can save them from that situation. In addition, they will firmly believe that Allah, the Exalted, only chooses what is best for everyone involved, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

As a result they will remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through every situation, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which will lead them to countless reward and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"…Indeed, the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

But one can only be protected from superstitious beliefs and their negative consequences and achieve the benefits discussed when they obtain strong faith through learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 189:

"…And it is not righteousness to enter houses from the back, but righteousness is [in] one who fears Allah. And enter houses from their doors. And fear Allah that you may succeed."

Generally speaking, this verse could also be indicating the importance of entering situations in a straight forward, clear and honest manner, instead of behaving with slyness whereby a person behaves in a deceptive manner when dealing with others. A back door is often used as way of describing someone who fails to fulfil their commitments and behaves in a deceptive manner with others. Therefore, a muslim must adopt a straight forward, clear and honest way of behaviour whereby they strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people according to the teachings of Islam, as the one who behaves in a deceptive manner is in reality only deceiving themself, even if this is not obvious to them, as they will undoubtedly face the consequences

of their behaviour in both worlds, as they cannot escape the power and control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

"…but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?..."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 189:

"…And fear Allah that you may succeed."

The final statement in this verse makes it clear how real success, which involves obtaining peace of mind in both worlds, is obtained. It is obtained through sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It does not take a genius to understand that all types of worldly success fade away with the passing of time and they often become a source of misery for its bearer. This is quite obvious when one observes the rich and famous and how despite possessing worldly things they lead miserable lives which are completely void of peace of mind. This is because Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, and therefore, He alone decides who obtains it and who does not. Chapter 13 Ar Ra'd, verse 28:

“…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

And chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The condition of obtaining peace of mind is simple and involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. But if one fails to fulfil this simple condition set for obtaining peace of mind, they may well experience moments of fun and entertainment but overall their life will be full of mental disorders, such as anxiety, stress and depression. Again, this is obvious when one observes the rich and famous and those who misuse the blessings they have been granted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 190-194

وَقَٰتِلُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمۡ وَلَا تَعۡتَدُوٓاْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلۡمُعۡتَدِينَ
١٩٠

وَٱقۡتُلُوهُمۡ حَيۡثُ ثَقِفۡتُمُوهُمۡ وَأَخۡرِجُوهُم مِّنۡ حَيۡثُ أَخۡرَجُوكُمۡ وَٱلۡفِتۡنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ ٱلۡقَتۡلِ وَلَا تُقَٰتِلُوهُمۡ عِندَ
ٱلۡمَسۡجِدِ ٱلۡحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يُقَٰتِلُوكُمۡ فِيهِ فَإِن قَٰتَلُوكُمۡ فَٱقۡتُلُوهُمۡ كَذَٰلِكَ جَزَآءُ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ ١٩١

فَإِنِ ٱنتَهَوۡاْ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٞ ١٩٢

وَقَٰتِلُوهُمۡ حَتَّىٰ لَا تَكُونَ فِتۡنَةٞ وَيَكُونَ ٱلدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ ٱنتَهَوۡاْ فَلَا عُدۡوَٰنَ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ١٩٣

ٱلشَّهۡرُ ٱلۡحَرَامُ بِٱلشَّهۡرِ ٱلۡحَرَامِ وَٱلۡحُرُمَٰتُ قِصَاصٞ فَمَنِ ٱعۡتَدَىٰ عَلَيۡكُمۡ فَٱعۡتَدُواْ عَلَيۡهِ بِمِثۡلِ مَا ٱعۡتَدَىٰ
عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ مَعَ ٱلۡمُتَّقِينَ ١٩٤

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.

And kill them [in battle] wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and fitnah [oppression] is worse than killing. And do not fight them at al-Masjid al-Ḥarām until they fight you there. But if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers.

And if they cease, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

Fight them until there is no [more] fitnah [oppression] and [until] religion [i.e., worship] is [acknowledged to be] for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression [assault] except against the violators.

[Battle in] the sacred month is for [aggression committed in] the sacred month, and for [all] violations is legal retribution. So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you. And fear Allah and know that Allah is with those who fear Him."

In order to correctly understand the meanings of the verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, one must place them in their correct context. Meaning, no verse or Hadith can be taken in isolation without observing the context in which it was revealed or recorded in order to justify someone's actions. In order to correctly understand the context of the verses and Hadiths one must analyze them in the light of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only in this way will it become clear what or who a specific verse or Hadith refers to.

In addition, Muslims can only take up arms against external aggressors under the banner of a legitimate ruler and when it is done according to the injunctions found within the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who fight must constantly fear Allah, the Exalted, in crossing these limits and rules. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

"*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors."*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 194:

"…*So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you. And fear Allah…"*

One such rule is to resort to war only when one is attacked, as indicated by the main verses under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

"*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you…"*

Therefore, showing physical aggression against an enemy in a state of peace is forbidden. Another rule is that when the enemy desists from aggression then Muslims must desist also. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 193:

"…But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression [i.e., assault] except against the violators."

If the enemy desires peace it must be granted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 90:

"…So if they remove themselves from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allāh has not made for you a cause [for fighting] against them."

The third rule is that civilians are not to be harmed. This has been indicated by the main verses under discussion as this is transgressing. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, repeatedly forbade women, children, elders, and the sick, as well as monks and hermits to be harmed during war. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2614, and Musnad Ahmad, number 2728.

The first Caliph of Islam Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased him, forbade the killing of children, women and the elderly, in line with the teachings of Islam. He forbade the cutting of fruit bearing trees, damaging property and the killing of cattle. This has been advised in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, number 33121.

The second Caliph of Islam Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, made it clear to the Muslim armies not to harm non-soldiers such as a farmer. This has been advised in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, number 33120.

In case of impending conflict the Muslim nation are commanded to prepare as best as they can. This preparation aims to deter the enemy from attacking, in which case if the enemy wish for peace it must be granted to them. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verses 60-61:

“And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allāh and your enemy…And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also]…”

Permission is granted to fight those who do not honor their treaties with the Muslims. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 12-13:

“And if they break their oaths after their treaty and defame your religion, then combat the leaders of disbelief, for indeed, there are no oaths [sacred] to them; [fight them that] they might cease. Would you not fight against a people who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time?”

Islam has forbade attacking those who respect their treaties. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 7:

“…So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

There is no question of forcing anyone to accept Islam as it is something which must be accepted by one’s heart not only through one’s tongue and actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

“There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion…”

Those who are at peace with the Muslims are to be treated with justice at all times. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verses 8-9:

“Allāh does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allāh only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion…”

War is hateful to Allah, the Exalted, and Muslims must be forced into it while not desiring it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“Battle has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you…”

This is further indicated by the main verses under discussion as Allah, the Exalted, mentions two of His divine attributes both of which are connected to

His mercy and peace, namely, All Forgiving and All Merciful. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 192:

“And if they cease, then indeed, Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.”

He purposely chose to mention these divine attributes instead of His divine attributes of power and might to indicate that peace and security is what He prefers for mankind.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even warned Muslims not to desire fighting and instead commanded them to desire safety from Allah, the Exalted. But if they were forced to encounter the enemy then they must remain steadfast. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2966.

The real intent of these verses is to stress that force should be used only when its use is unavoidable, only to the extent that is absolutely necessary and under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

As mentioned earlier, it is vital to assess a verse or a Hadith in its right context in order to understand who, what and where it applies. Unfortunately,

many people, intentionally or unintentionally, fail to interpret the verses and Hadiths on fighting in this way. One very famous example is of a verse which is referred to as the sword verse even though the word “sword” is not mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 5:

“And when the inviolable months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush…”

As explained earlier in detail even this statement of war is restricted to specific conditions and concessions of peace. In addition, studying the historical context of this and other related verses clearly prove that it is not a universal principle for fighting non-Muslims. Meaning, the verse refers to a specific group of people, at a specific time and in a specific place.

The surrounding verses of the sword verse clearly indicate on multiple occasions that the polytheists referred to are only those who repeatedly violated their peace treaties with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and engaged in acts of violent aggression against the Muslim community and its allies. For example, the verse immediately before the Sword verse, meaning, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 4, states:

“Excepted are those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists and then they have not been deficient toward you in anything or supported

anyone against you; so complete for them their treaty until their term [has ended]. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

This is followed by another command in a related verse, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 7:

“How can there be for the polytheists a treaty in the sight of Allāh and with His Messenger, except for those with whom you made a treaty at al-Masjid al-Ḥarām? So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

The crimes of these polytheists whom fighting was commanded against are mentioned in other related verses. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 8-10:

“How [can there be a treaty] while, if they gain dominance over you, they do not observe concerning you any pact of kinship or covenant of protection? They satisfy you with their mouths, but their hearts refuse [compliance], and most of them are defiantly disobedient. They have exchanged the signs of Allāh for a small price and averted [people] from His way. Indeed, it was evil that they were doing. They do not observe toward a believer any pact of kinship or covenant of protection. And it is they who are the transgressors.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 12-13:

“And if they break their oaths after their treaty and defame your religion, then combat the leaders of disbelief, for indeed, there are no oaths [sacred] to them; [fight them that] they might cease. Would you not fight against a people who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time?...”

Theses specific polytheists continuously broke their agreements and aided others against Islam. They began hostilities against the Muslims, prevented people from accepting Islam, expelled Muslims from Mecca and Masjid Al Haram. At least eight times in the quoted verses their crimes against the Muslims are mentioned.

In chapter 9 Tawbah, verse 12, which was quoted earlier, the goal of fighting the “leaders of disbelief” is so they “cease” from their acts of aggression. These verses, like the rest, indicate the importance of adhering to specific conditions during times of war such as fighting only those who fight them first.

In addition, these polytheists were still offered many warnings and concessions. They were given a four-month period of respite and peace. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 2:

“So travel freely, [O disbelievers], throughout the land [during] four months but know that you cannot cause failure to Allah…”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 5:

“And when the inviolable [four] months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush…”

This respite was given so that they either accept Islam or peacefully leave the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to grant protection to any of these polytheists who requested it so that they have the opportunity to listen to the teachings of Islam without any fear or pressure or they could peacefully leave the Arabian Peninsula without fear of being harmed. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 6:

“And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allāh [i.e., the Qur’ān]. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know.”

The command in the sword verse of fighting and killing these polytheists would only come into effect if they remained in the Arabian Peninsula after the four-month respite without accepting Islam. It is important to note that many of the polytheists took advantage of this respite and accepted Islam. Because of this respite fighting came to an end and no blood was actually shed on account of the sword verse, as the aim of this verse was to act as a deterrent from further bloodshed meaning, either these polytheists accept Islam or leave the Arabian Peninsula peacefully.

To conclude, the surrounding verses and the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, place the sword verse in its correct context. Meaning, these verses were specifically revealed in order to put an end to attacks from specific hostile polytheists against the Muslim community. Therefore, they cannot be blankly applied to others after them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

"*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors."*

Generally speaking, as Islam is the religion of balance it does not advocate an extremely harsh attitude against aggressors nor does it advocate an extremely gentle and weak attitude against aggressors. All people have the

right to defend themselves, their families and properties but this must be done within limits. Sadly, this is an important principle overlooked by many governments who target innocent people in the name of self-defense and fair retribution. Aggressors must be only targeted in a way they initially attacked. As indicated by the main verses under discussion, if one crosses the line of fair retaliation, they will be labeled the wrongdoer and will be held accountable for their actions. These wrongdoers may well find that on Judgement Day, when justice will be established, they are forced to hand over their good deeds to those they transgressed against. And if necessary, these wrongdoers will be forced to take the sins of those who they transgressed against until justice is established. This may well cause the wrongdoer to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 194:

"…*So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you. And fear Allah…"*

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

"*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors."*

Another aspect of transgressing is when one fights against aggressors for the wrong reason, such as gaining power and wealth. One must fight against

aggressors only for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and to spread justice and peace within society, as Allah, the Exalted, has commanded. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 193:

"*Fight them until there is no [more] fitnah [oppression] and [until] religion [i.e., worship] is [acknowledged to be] for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression [assault] except against the violators.*"

As commonly observed today, those who fight for worldly reasons often transgress the bounds of fair retaliation, even if they claim to be muslims, as their only interest is to gain power and wealth. Those who fought for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, never transgressed the bounds of fair retaliation as they knew transgressing these bounds was criticized by Allah, the Exalted. This is obvious when one turns the pages of Islamic history.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

"*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.*"

This command also includes one's spiritual struggle with all the forces which attempt to prevent them from sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, such as

the Devil, their desires, social media, fashion, culture and other people. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In reality, it is this struggle which is greater than physically fighting the enemies of Islam, as this spiritual struggle occurs continuously unlike physically fighting. This spiritual struggle is achieved when one learns and acts on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure their faith strengthens through understanding the clear evidences discussed therein. Strong faith will encourage one to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings even when one's faces opposition from other things. This leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who possesses weak faith will be overcome by the opposition their face and they will be encouraged and tempted into misusing the blessings they have been granted. As Allah, the Exalted, alone controls their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, this attitude only leads to trouble, stress and difficulties in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

But as indicated by the end of verse 190, this spiritual struggle must be carried out according to the teachings of the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”*

One must avoid acting on other sources of religious knowledge even if it leads to good deeds, as acting in this manner is a type of transgression Allah,

the Exalted, criticizes. The more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

As per usual, Allah, the Exalted, always leaves the door of sincere repentance and reformation open for all, even to those who have transgressed the bounds of correct behaviour. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 192:

"*And if they cease, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.*"

Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 193:

"*Fight them until there is no [more] fitnah [oppression] and [until] religion [i.e., worship] is [acknowledged to be] for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression [assault] except against the violators."*

As discussed earlier, even though fighting has been commanded against a specific group of people, at a specific time, in a specific place and for a specific reason, none the less Allah, the Exalted, still commanded the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to desist from fighting if the enemy desisted and only continue to fight if they violated a peace agreement. Therefore, as fighting is enjoined in specific conditions, this means a Muslim's general behaviour must be one of peace. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 4998, that a true muslim and believer is the one who keeps their verbal and physical harm away from others and their possessions. In addition, even though the non-Muslims of Mecca committed many atrocities against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, such as attempting to assassinate him and forcing him to leave Mecca and atrocities against his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were tortured and even killed because of their faith, even then Allah, the Exalted, extended His forgiveness and mercy to them. This is Islam's code of conduct with the world. This therefore must be the behaviour shown by all Muslims during a time of peace or war. It is therefore vital to understand the difference between extreme and rare situations from the common standards of behaviour as misguided people often mix the two up in order to show Islam to be a violent religion.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 191-193:

“*And kill them [in battle] wherever you overtake them and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and fitnah [oppression] is worse than killing. And do not fight them at al-Masjid al-Ḥarām until they fight you there. But if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers. And if they cease, then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. Fight them until there is no [more] fitnah [oppression] and [until] religion [i.e., worship] is [acknowledged to be] for Allah. But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression [assault] except against the violators.”*

The corruption in these verses refer to the wide negative effects of the oppression caused by the enemies of Islam meaning, the non-Muslims of Mecca. The heart of this corruption was their misguided faith and loyalties to their tribes, love for wealth, culture and false gods. The specific corruption mentioned in the following verse further proves that fighting was commanded against a specific group of non-Muslims in Mecca and therefore, these verses cannot be applied to others blankly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 217:

“…Say, "Fighting therein is great [sin], but averting [people] from the way of Allāh and disbelief in Him and [preventing access to] al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and the expulsion of its people therefrom are greater [evil] in the sight of Allāh. And fitnah is greater than killing."…”

Therefore, the corruption in these verses refers to the persecution of innocent people. It refers to a situation whereby either a person or a group is subjected to harassment and intimidation for having accepted, as true, a

set of ideas contrary to those currently held, and for striving to effect reforms in the existing order of society by preaching what is good and forbidding what is wrong. Therefore, the only way to prevent this specific harming of innocent people by this corruption was to fight the enemy until Islam was allowed to be practiced openly without opposition and the negative harms to society caused by the non-Muslims was stopped.

In the main verses under discussion it is obvious the word cease refers to fighting and not ceasing from their misguided religion as one cannot be forced to accept Islam as it is a matter of the heart not just the limbs. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah 256:

“There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion…”

In addition, the widespread oppression caused by oppressive rulers, such as the Romans and Persians, during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was widely known. They would constantly oppress the people of the land they had control over. Fighting these people might have led to the killing of soldiers, soldiers which signed up to fight and die, but in the long run it removed the oppression the innocent citizens were subjected to. And if Islamic rule was established correctly, like it was during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the rightly-guided Caliphs after him, then justice would prevail in the land. Therefore, from this one can understand that long-standing oppression to the people is worse than the killing of soldiers, if it leads to justice being established.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 194:

"*[Battle in] the sacred month is for [aggression committed in] the sacred month, and for [all] violations is legal retribution. So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you. And fear Allah…"*

Doing battle during the four Holy months in the year was forbidden even before the coming of Islam (these months were: Dhul Al Qa'dah, Dhul Al Hijjah, Muharram and Rajab). But Allah, the Exalted, made it clear that this should not prevent one from defending themself if the need arose. This again indicates the importance of only fighting in self-defense within the bounds of fair retaliation. Legal retribution is an important and fair concept as all people have a right to defend themselves from wrongdoing. In addition, if legal retribution was not lawful then many wrongdoers would take advantage of innocent people, knowing their faith prevents them from defending themselves. This would only cause more corruption to spread within society. Without legal retribution, those who would normally be deterred by observing people taking legal retribution against those who wronged them would not be deterred and would instead be encouraged to join the other wrongdoers in society. This would only increase the corruption within society. Without legal retribution, many victims would take the law into their own hands as they believe justice was not established. This again only increases the spread of corruption and crimes within society. One only needs to observe those countries that impose soft laws against crimes, such as rape and murder, and how their soft laws fail to deter others from committing these

crimes and as a result these crimes are increasing throughout their societies. The aim of legal retribution is to establish justice and prevent the spread of further crimes, it is simply naïve to believe otherwise.

But even in case of legal retribution, muslims have been encouraged to constantly fear the consequences of their actions in the court of Allah, the Exalted, so that they do not cross the limits of fair retaliation and so that they are inspired to adopt a merciful and forgiving attitude against those who have wronged them, as long as this does not encourage them to increase their wrongdoing against people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 194:

"…*So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you. And fear Allah and know that Allah is with those who fear Him."*

Those who continue to use the blessings they have been granted correctly according to Islamic teachings, such as their social strength, will be blessed with the continuous support of Allah, the Exalted. This support will ensure they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if they face moments of difficulties and oppression. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 15-16:

"…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them

out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But those who misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as their social strength, will find that they lose the support of Allah, the Exalted. This will only lead to trouble, stress and difficulties in both worlds, even if they appear powerful and influential, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the affairs of the universe. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 42:

“And never think that Allāh is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays them [i.e., their account] for a Day when eyes will stare [in horror].”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 194:

“…*and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.”*

Commanding people to understand this reality indicates the importance of gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one becomes firm in faith. The stronger one’s faith, the more they will remain steadfast on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This is the essence of fearing Allah, the Exalted, and righteousness which leads to His company and continuous support. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 194:

“…*and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.”*

Whereas, ignorance of Islamic teachings only causes one to adopt weak faith. Weak faith will encourage one to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn leads to trouble, stress and difficulties in both worlds, as this person has forgotten Allah, the Exalted, and His complete control over all aspects of their lives. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

To conclude, when the main verses are observed in their proper context the truth becomes abundantly clear. Firstly, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were only granted permission to fight in self-defense while obeying the rules outlined by Allah, the Exalted, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, some of which have been discussed earlier.

Secondly, these verses follow on from discussing the change in the focal point and the Holy Pilgrimage, which are all connected to Mecca. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 144:

"…So turn your face [i.e., yourself] toward al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. And wherever you [believers] are, turn your faces [i.e., yourselves] toward it [in prayer]…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 189:

“They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], about the crescent moons. Say, "They are measurements of time for…Hajj [pilgrimage]."…”

In addition, the main verses under discussion make it clear that the fighting which has been commanded is related to Mecca and against the non-Muslims who expelled the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, from Mecca. Therefore, these verses refer to fighting at a specific time, against a specific group of people, in a specific place and for a specific reason namely, in self-defense and to prevent the spread of corruption and oppression in the land, according to a set of rules outlined by the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 195

وَأَنفِقُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا۟ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى ٱلتَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوٓا۟ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٩٥﴾

“And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction [by refraining]. And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good.”

As this verse comes after discussing the importance of self-defense and eliminating oppression within society, even by physical force under strict guidelines, Allah, the Exalted, warns people that if they fail to do so then it will lead to their own destruction, as fighting against oppression requires one to use their effort, energy and wealth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 195:

"*And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction [by refraining]…"*

This indicates the importance of remaining firm on actively removing oppressive elements within society according to the teachings of Islam by using the resources one has been granted correctly, according to the teachings of Islam.

Generally speaking, the main verse advises muslims to always use the blessings they have been granted correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as this alone will prevent destruction for them in both worlds, as they will obtain peace of mind and body in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 195:

"*And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction [by refraining]…"*

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

It is vital to understand that as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls all things, including the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind and who does not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

Therefore, a person must accept and act on the teachings of Islam even if their desires are contradicted as this is best for their mental and physical well-being. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them and even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this patient will obtain mental and physical well-being, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings so that they use the blessings they have been granted correctly. But just like a foolish patient who ignores the medical advice of their doctor will obtain poor mental and physical health, so will the person who ignores the teachings of Islam thereby misusing the

blessings they have been granted. This reality is obvious when one observes the rich and influential who misuse the blessings they have been granted and how as a result they are drowned in mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, substance addiction and suicidal tendencies, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 195:

“*And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your [own] hands into destruction [by refraining]…”*

This also eliminates wishful thinking whereby one misuses the blessings they have been granted and yet still expects Allah, the Exalted, will bless them in both worlds. Real hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, as indicated by this verse, is when one strives to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and then hopes for blessings and salvation in both worlds. This difference has also been explained in this way in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Therefore, one must strive to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, according to Islamic teachings, which is the essence of goodness and therefore attracts divine love. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 195:

“…And do good; indeed, Allāh loves the doers of good.”

As nothing specific has been stated in respect to doing good, it indicates that everyone, irrespective of how many worldly blessings they have been granted, has the ability to do the good which leads to divine pleasure. Every person has been granted something, such as their physical strength or their ability to speak, which they can use in the correct way, according to the teachings of Islam in order to fulfil this verse.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 195:

"…And do good; indeed, Allāh loves the doers of good."

The one who obtains divine pleasure and love will undoubtedly obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if they face difficulties during their lives. But it is important to note that divine pleasure and love does not mean one will not be tested in this world, as the purpose of life in this world is to test people. Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 2:

"[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is better in deed…"

Freedom from all difficulties and tests is only obtained in Paradise. Divine pleasure and love will instead ensure one continues to experience peace of mind even during difficulties, just like the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, who was granted peace of mind and body even when he was in the midst of a great fire. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verses 68-69:

“They said, "Burn him and support your gods - if you are to act.". We [i.e., Allāh] said, "O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham."”

This is just like the patient who undergoes a painful medical procedure under anesthesia so that they do not feel any pain. This will ensure one remains firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, through every situation, whether times of difficulties or ease, which in turn leads to more peace of mind and success in both worlds. The root of this success is remaining firm on using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verses 15-16:

“…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 195:

“…And do good; indeed, Allāh loves the doers of good.”

This is further proof that one cannot obtain divine pleasure without actualizing their faith by doing good actions. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This therefore, challenges the misguided attitude whereby one believes that verbally claiming faith in Islam is enough to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. The one who therefore fails to actualize their faith will not obtain divine pleasure which means they will not obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. This is the main reason why people who verbally claim to be muslim yet fail to show it in their actions are always drowned in mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, as they have forgotten Allah, the Exalted, with their actions, even if they verbally remember Him through their declaration of faith. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 196-203

وَأَتِمُّواْ ٱلْحَجَّ وَٱلْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا ٱسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ ٱلْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُواْ رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ ٱلْهَدْىُ مَحِلَّهُۥ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِۦٓ أَذًى مِّن رَّأْسِهِۦ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّن صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ فَإِذَآ أَمِنتُمْ فَمَن تَمَتَّعَ بِٱلْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى ٱلْحَجِّ فَمَا ٱسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ ٱلْهَدْيِ فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَٰثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِى ٱلْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشَرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَن لَّمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُۥ حَاضِرِى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعْلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعِقَابِ ﴿١٩٦﴾

ٱلْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَٰتٌ فَمَن فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ ٱلْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِى ٱلْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفْعَلُواْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمْهُ ٱللَّهُ وَتَزَوَّدُواْ فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ ٱلزَّادِ ٱلتَّقْوَىٰ وَٱتَّقُونِ يَٰٓأُوْلِى ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ ﴿١٩٧﴾

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَبْتَغُواْ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَإِذَآ أَفَضْتُم مِّنْ عَرَفَٰتٍ فَٱذْكُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ عِندَ ٱلْمَشْعَرِ ٱلْحَرَامِ وَٱذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَىٰكُمْ وَإِن كُنتُم مِّن قَبْلِهِۦ لَمِنَ ٱلضَّآلِّينَ ﴿١٩٨﴾

ثُمَّ أَفِيضُواْ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ ٱلنَّاسُ وَٱسْتَغْفِرُواْ ٱللَّهَ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٩﴾

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُم مَّنَٰسِكَكُمْ فَٱذْكُرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ ءَابَآءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ
ذِكْرًا فَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُۥ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ مِنْ
خَلَٰقٍ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَآ ءَاتِنَا فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ
ٱلنَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾

أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا۟ وَٱللَّهُ سَرِيعُ ٱلْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

۞ وَٱذْكُرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ فِىٓ أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَٰتٍ فَمَن تَعَجَّلَ فِى يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَآ إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَن
تَأَخَّرَ فَلَآ إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ ٱتَّقَىٰ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾

“And complete the Hajj and Umrah for Allah. But if you are prevented, then [offer] what can be obtained with ease of sacrificial animals. And do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animal has reached its place of slaughter. And whoever among you is ill or has an ailment of the head [making shaving necessary must offer] a ransom of fasting [three days] or charity or sacrifice. And when you are secure, then whoever performs Umrah [during the Hajj months] followed by Hajj [offers] what can be obtained with ease of sacrificial animals. And whoever cannot find [or afford such an animal] - then a fast of three days during Hajj and of seven when you have returned [home]. Those are ten complete [days]. This is for those whose family is not in the area of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. And fear Allah and know that Allah is severe in penalty.

Ḥajj is [during] well-known months, so whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein [by entering the state of iḥrām], there is [to be for him] no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during

Hajj. And whatever good you do - Allah knows it. And take provisions, but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allah. And fear Me, O you of understanding.

There is no blame upon you for seeking bounty from your Lord [during Hajj]. But when you depart from ʿArafāt, remember Allah at al-Mashʿar al-Ḥarām. And remember Him, as He has guided you, for indeed, you were before that among those astray.

Then depart from the place from where [all] the people depart and ask forgiveness of Allah. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

And when you have completed your rites, remember Allah like your [previous] remembrance of your fathers or with [much] greater remembrance. And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share.

But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire."

Those will have a share of what they have earned, and Allah is swift in account.

And remember Allah during [specific] numbered days. Then whoever hastens [his departure] in two days - there is no sin upon him; and whoever delays [until the third] - there is no sin upon him - for him who fears Allah. And fear Allah and know that unto Him you will be gathered."

These verses begin by inviting people towards adopting sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, when performing the Holy Pilgrimage or the Visitation. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 196:

"*And complete the Hajj and Umrah for Allah…"*

This involves performing these holy journeys in order to please Allah, the Exalted, with an aim to sincerely repent from any sins they may have committed in the past and a firm promise to change for the better if they are granted the ability to return home. This is because these holy journeys aim to remind a person of the Day of Judgement where the whole of mankind will have left behind all their worldly possessions, connections and relationships and will be gathered waiting for their final judgement. A positive sign of this intention is that when a person returns home they will dedicate more energy and time to learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they use the blessings they have been granted correctly. This in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. This is the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1773, that the reward for an accepted Holy Pilgrimage is nothing except Paradise. Therefore, they must not perform these holy journeys for any other reason, such as for the sake of tourism, otherwise they will not receive the reward they should obtain.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 196:

"*And complete the Hajj and Umrah for Allah…*"

Generally speaking, one must adopt sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted, in all their affairs. Meaning, they must speak and act in order to please Allah, the Exalted, whether their speech or actions are connected to worldly things, such as earning lawful wealth or religious activities, such as praying. As long as one adopts a good intention and acts according to the teachings of Islam, they will obtain reward, even if they are performing worldly actions, such as raising their children. A positive sign of a good intention is that one does not expect nor hope for compensation from anyone other than Allah, the Exalted. A positive intention ensures one gains reward in both worlds and avoids the bitterness attached to acting for the sake of people, who are never pleased with the efforts of others. It is vital to remember that the one who acts for any reason other than to please Allah, the Exalted, will not gain any reward in this world or the next. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Allah, the Exalted, then outlines some rules in respect to performing the Holy Pilgrimage and the Visitation. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 196:

"…*But if you are prevented, then [offer] what can be obtained with ease of sacrificial animals. And do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animal has reached its place of slaughter. And whoever among you is ill or has an ailment of the head [making shaving necessary must offer] a ransom of fasting [three days] or charity or sacrifice. And when you are secure, then*

whoever performs Umrah [during the Hajj months] followed by Hajj [offers] what can be obtained with ease of sacrificial animals. And whoever cannot find [or afford such an animal] - then a fast of three days during Hajj and of seven when you have returned [home]. Those are ten complete [days]. This is for those whose family is not in the area of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām…"

In the sixth year after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, migrated to Medina, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, set out towards Mecca intending to perform the Visitation (Umra) and not to engage in warfare with the non-Muslims of Mecca. During the journey, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was warned that the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched a force to prevent them from entering Mecca. After setting up camp in Hudaibiya, the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca sent different people to talk to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to ascertain his motives for coming to Mecca. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, told each of them he only desired to perform the Visitation (Umra) in peace. After a few incidences, eventually the non-Muslim leaders of Mecca dispatched Suhayl Bin Amr to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to make peace with him but set some conditions, all of which seemed to outwardly favor the non-Muslims of Mecca. After the pact was signed the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, returned to Medina without performing the Visitation (Umra), which was part of the pact. This pact of peace for ten years in reality favored the Muslims. Prior to this pact, whenever Muslims and non-Muslims met it often led to some sort of fighting but when warfare came to an end whenever these people met they only conversed. When Islam was explained to the non-Muslims they began to accept it. Islam entered the hearts of more people in the next two years than it did in all the previous years since its advent, around 18 years. This clear victory was acknowledged by Allah, the

Exalted, who revealed chapter 48 Al Fath after the agreement had been signed. Chapter 48 Al Fath, verse 1:

“Indeed, We have given you, a clear conquest”

This has been discussed in Imam Ibn Kathir’s, the Life of the Prophet, Volume 3, Page 231.

In addition, as per usual, Allah, the Exalted, always aims to make things easy for people by granting them concessions in different situations. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

“…Allāh intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship…”

A person must not be fooled into believing that if Allah, the Exalted, truly wanted ease for people, He would not put any restrictions on them and would allow them instead to act according to their desires. This is a false belief as Allah, the Exalted, knows what is best for a person’s mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing and therefore advises accordingly. Just like a good medical doctor prescribes bitter medicines and a strict diet plan knowing it is best for their patient, Allah, the Exalted, places certain restrictions on people as it is best for them. Doctors can make mistakes with what they advise but

as Allah, the Exalted, knows all things, His commands and prohibitions are free from all mistakes. It is strange how a person can trust the advice of a medical doctor which often contradicts a person's desires, such as advising a strict diet plan, yet they will not trust Allah, the Exalted, who knows all things.

Whenever Allah, the Exalted, outlines a code of conduct, He often supports it with reminding people to fear Him and the consequences of disobeying Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 196:

"…And fear Allah and know that Allah is severe in penalty."

This is because two things are required to ensure justice and peace spread within society. The first is a good and unbiased code of conduct, something which can only come from Allah, the Exalted, as man-made laws will always be imperfect, due to a lack of knowledge and foresight, and they will always be biased in some way or another. The second thing is the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and facing the consequences of one's actions and choices. The second component is vital as the one who feels they can escape the law, such as the police, will be tempted and encouraged to break the law. Therefore, the fear of Allah, the Exalted, is needed as it will prevent this person from breaking the law and wronging others, even if they believe they can escape the government. When one or both of these two components are missing, then it will always prevent a society from achieving justice and peace. This is quite evident when one observes the world today.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 196:

“…And fear Allah and know that Allah is severe in penalty.”

Generally speaking, the only way to obtain peace of mind in both worlds, is by fearing Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This is only achieved when they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 196:

“…and know that Allah is severe in penalty.”

One must learn and act on Islamic knowledge in order to become aware of the severity of disobeying Allah, the Exalted. People often become deluded by the fact they are not punished immediately and in a way which is obvious to them whenever they disobey Allah, the Exalted. The punishments of Allah, the Exalted, in this day and age, are often very subtle, such as poor mental

health despite possessing many worldly things, such as wealth and fame. Therefore, the ignorant person often fails to connect their disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves misusing the blessings they have been granted, and the punishment they face in this world. Whatever one obtains through disobeying Allah, the Exalted, will become a source of stress and anxiety for them in both worlds, even if this is not obvious to them. This is the major reason why the rich and famous are often drowned in mental health issues, such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse and suicidal tendencies, even though they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Due to ignorance of Islamic knowledge, they fail to make the connection between their disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, the controller of their spiritual hearts, the abode of peace of mind, and their punishment. As a result, they sink deeper into their mental health problems. This punishment, from this point of view, is worse than the punishments faced by the old nations who were completely destroyed after they persisted on disobeying Allah, the Exalted, as this type of punishment is swift and is completed in a moment compared to the subtle form which is like being tortured over a prolonged period of time. Therefore, one must learn and act on Islamic knowledge in order to understand and avoid the subtle punishments of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 196:

"…and know that Allah is severe in penalty."

Allah, the Exalted, then outlines the importance of sincerely obeying Him during the Holy Pilgrimage so that they benefit from it in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

"*Ḥajj is [during] well-known months, so whoever has made Hajj obligatory upon himself therein [by entering the state of iḥrām], there is [to be for him] no sexual relations and no disobedience and no disputing during Hajj…"*

The one who fails to fulfil these conditions will not fulfil the purpose of the Holy Pilgrimage and is therefore unlikely to sincerely repent from their

previous sins nor reform themselves in the future so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Therefore, it is vital for muslims to adopt the correct attitude when going for the Holy Pilgrimage and the Visitation otherwise they may well return home more sinful then when they departed for their holy journey. The command to avoid disobedience in verse 197, indicates the importance of ensuring one remains steadfast on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

"*…and no disobedience and no disputing during Hajj…"*

A prohibition of disputing with others has been mentioned separately as disputes between relatives travelling together often occurs and millions of muslims gathered in a small space often leads to disputes with each other also. A muslim must strive to control their speech and actions, especially during their holy journey, in order to avoid destroying their reward. This a specific lesson which has general implications. Meaning, one should not adopt a disputing mentality whereby they constantly argue with others. Muslims must instead adopt an easy going nature whereby they are firm on their beliefs and are happy to explain their point of view in a respectful and clear manner without arguing or debating with others, in both religious or worldly matters. If the greatest human teacher, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded several times not to behave as a controller over people, thereby forcing his opinions

on others, then no person after him should try to behave in this manner either. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

“So remind, you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller.”

Therefore, one must adopt the tradition of all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, by not being forceful with their opinions and instead presenting them in a clear and respectful manner to others, whether they are accepted by others or not.

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds people that whatever good they do, such as avoiding disputes with others, may not be appreciated or noticed by others yet it is known to Allah, the Exalted, and will be rewarded by Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

“…And whatever good you do - Allāh knows it…”

This reminds muslims the importance of adopting a good sincerity at all times. The one who acts for other than Allah, the Exalted, will not gain any reward from Him nor will they gain any real benefit from others, such as respect. Whereas, the one who adopts sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, will be

rewarded for every and any act of good they do in both worlds, even if it is ignored and overlooked by others.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

"…And whatever good you do - Allāh knows it…"

This is also a general statement after specific ones. Meaning, one must strive to do good according to their means. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As doing good is not limited in anyway, no one can excuse themself from doing the good advised in Islam.

As some people would not take the provisions needed for their Holy Pilgrimage or Visitation and instead rely on others to sustain them, Allah, the Exalted, ordered them to take the provisions they needed for their holy journeys. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1523. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

"…*And take provisions…"*

In addition, Islam makes it clear that if someone does not possess the provisions to sustain themself and their family they have left at home, they should not go on the Holy Pilgrimage or the Visitation.

This command to take provisions indicates the importance of adopting independence. One must avoid adopting a lazy attitude whereby they rely on others for their needs instead of using the resources they have been granted, such as their physical strength, in order to fulfil their own needs and responsibilities. There is no harm in turning to other people when one has used their resources first but this should be avoided as much as possible, as the one who adopts a habit of depending on others will become lazy and they will lose self-respect. The one who loses self-respect is more likely to commit sins. Independence from others will also strengthen one's trust in Allah, the Exalted. The stronger one's trust in Allah, the Exalted, the more they will sincerely obey Him, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in Islamic teachings, and they will trust that He chooses what is best for them in all situations. Whereas, the one who is dependent on people will weaken their trust in Allah, the Exalted, and instead act in ways pleasing to people. This always leads to trouble, stress and difficulties in both worlds. In addition, as advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7432, Allah, the Exalted, loves the independent person as it leads to trusting in Him. This divine love will aid one in all their affairs so that they obtain peace of mind through every situation. One must therefore strive to utilize all the means they have been granted and only turn to others for a genuine need.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

"…*And take provisions…"*

It is important to note that one's initial intention for the Holy Pilgrimage and the Visitation should be to please and obey Allah, the Exalted, and earning provision must be a secondary aim. One should not make their religious journeys a secondary aim and earning provision their primary aim as this attitude will not be so spiritually beneficial for them. This is the one who only performs the holy journey as they desire to earn lawful wealth, whereas the correct mentality is that one should undertake the religious journey in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and if the need arises, to earn lawful wealth along the way. If one can obtain provision beforehand so that they do not need to earn provision during these religious journeys then that would be better as it makes their intention to please Allah, the Exalted, firm. This has been hinted in the main verses under discussion.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

"…*And take provisions…"*

Generally speaking, this small statement explains an important concept in Islam, namely, how to trust in Allah, the Exalted. The correct method of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, involves using the worldly resources one has been granted by Allah, the Exalted, such as lawful medicine, in lawful ways according to the teachings of Islam and then accepting that whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them, such as becoming cured from a sickness or not, is best for them and therefore they continue to obey Allah, the Exalted, throughout every situation. This was the method of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. Trusting in Allah, the Exalted, therefore does not involve abandoning using the resources Allah, the Exalted, has provided a person, such as lawful medicine, as this makes the resource useless and Allah, the Exalted, does not create useless things. Neither does trusting in Allah, the Exalted, involve completely relying on the resources one has been granted and forgetting that all things only happen with the will of Allah, the Exalted, and He always chooses what is best for people, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

The one who overly relies on their resources will often place more trust in spiritual exercises and charms which are not rooted in Islamic teachings, which in turn further weakens their trust and belief that Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the affairs of the universe. The more one dives deeper into this attitude, the more likely they will be tricked by con artists pretending to be spiritual healers who claim to fix worldly problems for a fee yet prescribe spiritual exercises which often contradict the teachings of Islam. This will only lead to one corrupting their faith. Therefore, one must understand the reality

of trusting in Allah, the Exalted, and act accordingly in order to avoid the two extreme attitudes discussed.

Sadly, the Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, made Islam simple and easy yet many muslims after them complicated Islam by speaking about matters such as trusting in Allah, the Exalted, in confusing and elaborate ways, even though the concept is very simple and straight forward. It is therefore important for muslims to adhere strictly to learning and acting on the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they simplify Islam and make things easy for every person. They must avoid studying and acting on other sources of religious knowledge as they will only complicate things for a person and convince them the path to the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, is only for a few select people, even though His door is open to all and easily accessible. Complicating Islam allows them to create a hierarchy system whereby they convince the general public that closeness to Allah, the Exalted, is only achieved when they serve and blindly obey special spiritual people who are close to Allah, the Exalted. These spiritual people further complicate Islam for the general public in order to ensure they continue serving them, presenting them with gifts and blindly obeying them at all times, even though the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who understood Islam better than anyone else, did not behave in this manner with each other.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that the best type of provision one can take with them wherever they go, is the fear of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, 196:

“…but indeed, the best provision is fear of Allāh…”

This is because the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and being held accountable for their actions ensures one sincerely obeys Him. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to fear Allah, the Exalted, will inevitably misuse the blessings they have been granted. As Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, this person will not obtain peace of mind and instead the very worldly blessings they possess, such as fame and wealth, will become a source of stress, misery and depression for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

One only needs to use their common sense to understand the difference between the two outcomes. One only needs to observe the rich and famous and how they misuse the blessings they have been granted and as a result how they lead miserable lives. And one can clearly observe how those who use the blessings they have been granted in the correct way obtain peace of mind, even if they possess few worldly things. But only those who use their

common sense will understand this reality and choose the correct path for themselves. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

“…And fear Me, O you of understanding.”

Islam always strikes a perfect balance between dealing with worldly matters, such as earning lawful wealth, and preparing practically for the hereafter. In fact, when one performs worldly things, such as earning and correctly using lawful wealth, according to the teachings of Islam, they are counted as good deeds which aid them in preparing practically for their final judgement in the hereafter. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 198:

“There is no blame upon you for seeking bounty from your Lord [during ḥajj]…”

This compliments the command to take provisions for the Holy Pilgrimage and the Visitation, as often one needs to earn more wealth during such long and difficult journeys. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 197:

“…And take provisions…”

Generally speaking, this indicates that even though every person is on a journey towards Allah, the Exalted, and their final accountability on the Day of Judgement, they must not ignore their requirements and responsibilities in this world. Chapter 84 Al Inshiqaq, verse 6:

"O mankind, indeed you are laboring toward your Lord with [great] exertion and will meet Him."

The one who abandons the material world completely will find it difficult to fulfil their requirements and responsibilities, such as providing for their dependents, and as a result their attitude will hinder their progress towards the hereafter. Whereas, the one who completely engrosses all their efforts and dedicates all their resources to worldly things, even if they are lawful, will fail to prepare for their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This attitude will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn leads to difficulties, stress and problems in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

The balanced approach, as taught by Islam, is when one uses the worldly resources they have been granted according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, the rights of people and their own rights. This balanced approach will ensure they obtain peace of mind in this world and prepare adequately for their final accountability on the Day of Judgement as well. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 198:

“There is no blame upon you for seeking bounty from your Lord [during ḥajj]…”

This verse also reminds muslims that every single worldly thing they obtain has been created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, even the energy and effort required to obtain wealth. Remembering this fact will encourage one to therefore use the worldly things they have been granted correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Whereas, the one who fails to remember this will assume the worldly blessings they possess belong to them and they can therefore use them as they desire. As explained earlier, this is a trap which encourages one to misuse the blessings they have been granted which only leads to stress, misery and difficulties in both worlds.

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds muslims not to perform religious rituals in an empty manner whereby they perform the physical acts but do not fulfil the essence and purpose of the ritual, which is to encourage them to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, throughout their daily activities. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 198:

“…But when you depart from ʿArafāt, remember Allāh at al-Mashʿar al-Ḥarām…”

Even though the pilgrim is only in Arafat in order to remember and worship Allah, the Exalted, yet they have been commanded to remember Allah, the Exalted. As explained earlier, this means one must not treat religious rituals, such as the obligatory prayers, as lifeless acts which have no implication or effect on their day to day activities. The one who behaves in this manner has not fulfilled the purpose of religious rituals, even if they practically perform them all. Each religious ritual, such as the Holy Pilgrimage, is meant to encourage on to sincerely repent from their sins and to encourage them to obey Allah, the Exalted, throughout their day and in every situation they encounter. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is the real remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, which goes far beyond reciting the name of Allah, the Exalted, or His divine attributes a certain amount of times a day. Another important principle is then indicated in the next part of the verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 198:

"…And remember Him, as He has guided you [to]…"

This indicates the importance of obeying and worshipping Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One must avoid other sources of religious knowledge, even if they lead to good deeds, as the more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance which in turn leads to misguidance. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that

people would perform the Holy Pilgrimage between the time of the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, and the advent of Islam, yet its practices had been corrupted over time and polytheism had been introduced into them. These people believed they were remembering and worshipping Allah, the Exalted, correctly but as they did not follow what had been revealed to the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, strictly and instead fabricated their own rituals, they forgot Allah, the Exalted, and as a result became misguided. This has been indicated at the end of the verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 198:

"…And remember Him, as He has guided you, for indeed, you were before that among those astray."

This part of the verse could also mean one must show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, for granting them the ability to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. This gratitude must be shown in their intention, so that they only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. A positive sign of this is when one does not expect nor hope for any gratitude or compensation from people. The one who acts for the sake of people will not gain any reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Gratitude with the tongue involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. And gratitude with one's actions involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who shows gratitude in this way will earn more reward, blessings and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, will remain misguided as they will misuse the blessings they have been granted. This in turn will lead to trouble, stress and difficulties in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment as Allah, the Exalted, controls their affairs, including their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates the importance of equality in Islam with a specific example. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 199:

“Then depart from the place from where [all] the people depart…”

The residents of Mecca considered themselves above everyone else and therefore performed the Holy Pilgrimage in a different way. Allah, the Exalted, corrected this misguided attitude and reminded mankind that in the

eyes of Islam all people are equal. The only single standard which makes one person better than another is how righteous they are. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

"…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…"

The more a person uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, the more righteous they are. It is important to note that as one's intention is hidden they cannot claim people are better than others based on their physical actions. This eliminates all worldly barriers that have been erected by people which define superiority, such as wealth, fame, ethnicity, bloodline and gender. The muslim who believes that superiority lies in anything else must seek the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, as this is a major problem in their faith. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 199:

"Then depart from the place from where [all] the people depart and ask forgiveness of Allāh…"

This also indicates that all people are equally in desperate need for the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of who they are, how many worldly possessions they own or how religious they believe they are. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him,

has even declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5673, that no one, not even himself, will enter Paradise solely based on their deeds. Instead, it is the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, which will enter them into Paradise. This is because the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is needed to obey Him, as the inspiration, ability, opportunity and knowledge to obey Allah, the Exalted, comes from Him. Therefore, one must never become proud of their good deeds or some worldly status they possess and assume forgiveness and mercy is guaranteed for them in both worlds. Instead, one must constantly search for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, by striving hard to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings and sincerely repent whenever they happen to commit a sin, as no one is perfect. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. The one who behaves in this manner will obtain the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds, which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 199:

“Then depart from the place from where [all] the people depart…”

This also indicates the importance of unity amongst muslims. It is clear to everyone that a major reason why the muslim nation has weakened over time is due to a lack of unity. If muslims desire the same unity the

Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, possessed which allowed them to overcome all difficulties, then they must follow their behaviour. They put aside their own desires and instead molded their lives around the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In addition, muslims must be cautious in blindly following religious personalities, as some of them intentionally aim to create divisions within the muslim community so that they gain leadership. Muslims must instead support religious personalities that preach the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in a clear manner and avoid all other sources of religious knowledge, which only create divisions within the muslim community. Generally speaking, unity amongst muslims is also achieved when one only supports others in things which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

Sadly, many muslims support others based on their relationship with them, even if they are doing things which are displeasing to Allah, the Exalted. Or they refuse to support others in things pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as they do not have a relationship with the organizers. When muslims only support other muslims in what is pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, then it will strengthen the bond of faith between them, which in turn will strengthen their unity.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 199:

“…and ask forgiveness of Allāh. Indeed, Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.”

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, is All Forgiving, a muslim must strive to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain His forgiveness. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

“…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?...”

To clarify, this means one should take steps to protect themselves and others, such as their dependents, from being further harmed by others and then try to forgive the wrongdoer for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. Forgiving others without taking steps to prevent history from repeating itself is not advocated by Islam.

Similarly, as Allah, the Exalted, is all Merciful, a muslim must strive to show mercy to the entire creation for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain His mercy in both worlds. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1922, that whoever does not show mercy to others will not be shown mercy by Allah, the Exalted. The best way to show mercy to others is to treat

people how one desires to be treated by others. This is in fact the attitude of a true believer according to a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13. This includes helping others according to their means, such as financial, physical and emotional support.

As discussed earlier, Islam teaches muslims to avoid performing physical acts of religious rituals in an empty way whereby after the rituals are completed they continue to ignore the teachings of Islam in their daily activities. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 200:

“And when you have completed your rites, remember Allāh…”

The aim of religious rituals is that they encourage one to continue remembering and obeying Allah, the Exalted, throughout their normal day to day activities. This remembrance involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who fails to behave in this manner may complete the physical acts involved in religious rituals but they have failed to fulfil their purpose. This is a major reason why many muslims who fulfil the obligatory religious rituals, such as the five daily obligatory prayers, yet fail to obtain peace of mind as they failed to fulfil its purpose of continuing to obey Allah, the Exalted, in between their obligatory prayers.

Allah, the Exalted, then teaches a general lesson with a specific one. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 200:

“And when you have completed your rites, remember Allāh like your [previous] remembrance of your fathers or with [much] greater remembrance…”

The Arabs had a habit of gathering together after they had completed the Holy Pilgrimage in order to boast about their tribes and forefathers. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 1, Page 567. Allah, the Exalted, warned them to avoid this foolish attitude as people are not defined as superior in the eyes of Islam according to the worldly standards they boasted over, such as possessing wealth. In addition, this indicates the importance of not relying on the good deeds of others, such as one’s relatives, in order to obtain salvation in both worlds. Each person will be held accountable for their own deeds and their relative, irrespective of how pious they may have been, will not save them from their accountability. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 33:

“O mankind, fear your Lord and fear a Day when no father will avail his son, nor will a son avail his father at all…”

And chapter 53 An Najm, verse 39:

“And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives.”

Even though intercession on the Day of Judgement is a fact, none the less, it will only help people when they genuinely try to obey Allah, the Exalted, in this world. This has been indicated throughout the Holy Quran. Chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 8:

“Our Lord, and admit them to gardens of perpetual residence which You have promised them and whoever was righteous among their forefathers, their spouses and their offspring…”

If one adopts a lazy attitude whereby they ignore obeying Allah, the Exalted, and then expect someone else to save them on Judgement Day, they will be disappointed, as this attitude mocks the concept of intercession and is therefore highly disrespectful.

Therefore, one must avoid adopting a lazy attitude whereby they rely on others to intercede for them in the court of Allah, the Exalted, and instead strive to sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, even though they had the best person with them who they hoped would intercede for them on Judgement Day, namely, the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 200:

“And when you have completed your rites, remember Allāh like your [previous] remembrance of your fathers or with [much] greater remembrance…”

Allah, the Exalted, then discusses another vital aspect of Islam, namely, a muslim’s intention when they perform a religious ritual, such as the obligatory prayers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 200:

“…And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world,"…”

Sadly, muslims have the habit of performing religious rituals, especially, spiritual exercises advised by other people that are not advised by the Holy Quran or the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to gain something connected to the material world, such as a spouse, a child or a visa. Even though asking for worldly things is not prohibited in Islam yet when one’s intention to perform religious rituals is solely based on worldly gain or is prioritized over gaining religious blessings, such as peace of mind in both worlds, then it will lead to loss for them in both worlds, especially, in the hereafter, as they did not prioritize the hereafter in their intention. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 200:

“…And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share.”

In addition, as indicated by this verse, when one asks for worldly things, they do so without knowing if it is good for them, as they lack knowledge and foresight to determine this. Therefore, the very thing they are asking for may be harmful to them in this world as well as leading them to difficulties in the hereafter. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

It is therefore vital for muslims to adopt humility towards Allah, the Exalted, and accept their ignorance and lack of foresight in respect to the future instead of acting as if they know what is best for them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 200:

“…And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share.”

In addition, adopting a worldly attitude towards Islam is disliked as one should instead strive to perform religious rituals for the sake of pleasing Allah, the Exalted, and achieving peace of mind in both worlds. This was the attitude of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. One should remain content with whatever Allah, the Exalted, grants them in this world, knowing it is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them, and remain steadfast on using that in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This alone leads to achieving peace of mind and success in both worlds and therefore is far better than demanding specific worldly things while being ignorant of their outcome. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 201:

“But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire."”

It is strange how a muslim can take medicines from a medical doctor which they did not specifically ask for while trusting their doctor has granted them what is best for their mental and physical health, yet, they do not place this level of trust in Allah, the Exalted, as they demand specific things from Him believing they know what is best for them instead of trusting in His choices and decisions. A muslim must therefore accept their lack of knowledge and foresight and ask for general good things in this world and in the next and leave the specifics to Allah, the Exalted, as He knows what is best for each person. This is why the good mentioned in verse 201 is general and not specific. The good mentioned in verse 201 is anything which one uses in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, as this alone leads to good in both worlds. Anything which is misused in vain or sinful ways will never be good for a person and it will only become a source of stress, difficulties and trouble for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as Allah, the Exalted, controls their affairs, including their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

"And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep."

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 201:

"But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""

Protection from the fire of Hell is so important that it has been mentioned separately even though it is a part of asking for good in the hereafter. In fact, there is no good in the hereafter for the one who is not protected from the fire of Hell. In addition, as the hereafter has been mentioned twice in this rightly guided supplication and the material world has been mentioned a single time, it indicates that a person must be more concerned about the hereafter than acquiring and enjoying worldly things, even if they are lawful. Therefore, they must prioritize achieving peace of mind in the hereafter in

their day to day activities over acquiring and enjoying worldly things, even if they are lawful. This is because this world will always be imperfect, transient and temporal whereas the hereafter will always be permanent and perfect. One must therefore prioritize preparing for the perfect eternal abode over enjoying the imperfect temporal one.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 200-201:

“And when you have completed your rites, remember Allāh like your [previous] remembrance of your fathers or with [much] greater remembrance. And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share. ut among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire."”

Another important thing to note is that this supplication has been combined with an act of obedience, namely, performing the Holy Pilgrimage. Similarly, every supplication in the Holy Quran and in the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, is connected to acts of obedience. In addition, every supplication in the Holy Quran was performed by someone who was dedicated to acts of obedience. They strived throughout their life in using the blessings they had been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This indicates the importance of understanding that supplications are only truly effective when they are combined with acts of obedience. Sadly, many muslims have adopted a lazy attitude whereby they are good at performing supplications but will not

practically obey Allah, the Exalted. This is because supplicating to Allah, the Exalted, requires minimal energy, time and no other resources, such as wealth. It is clear from the teachings of Islam and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, that supplications are meant to be supported by acts of obedience in order to be effective. Every step in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the lives of his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, clearly shows how they physically obeyed Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they were granted correctly. They never only supplicated for relief or victory while refusing to act in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. A Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3499, clearly indicates that two special times within the day a supplication is responded to positively by Allah, the Exalted, are both connected to acts of obedience. The first time is directly after the obligatory prayers and the second is in the last part of night, when one should be performing the voluntary night prayer. In addition, the following verse clearly shows that supplications must be supported by acts of obedience in order to be complete and effective. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 10:

“…To Him ascends good speech, and righteous work raises it…”

Failing to understand that supplications must be supported by physical acts of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is a major reason why the state of muslims does not change in a positive way, as one must change their intention, speech and actions in order to create a positive change in their life. Chapter 13 Ar Ra’d, verse 11:

“…Indeed, Allāh will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves…”

In addition, one must use the resources available to them, such as their energy, in order to create positive change within their lives and they cannot rely solely on supplications. For example, the person facing marriage issues with their spouse must take practical steps to resolve the issues and couple this with supplications to Allah, the Exalted, for help. They cannot behave in a lazy manner by avoiding practically taking steps to resolve the issues they are facing while relying only on their supplications to Allah, the Exalted. As already explained, this passive and incorrect attitude contradicts the teachings of Islam.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 200-201:

“…And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share. But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire."”

These two supplications also makes it clear that one is not meant to adopt an extreme attitude whereby they are either completely engrossed in worldly things thereby neglecting the hereafter and preparing for it. Nor are they meant to abandon the material world in favour for the hereafter. Instead, they

must strive to acquire the things they need to fulfil their responsibilities and duties in a lawful manner and then use the worldly things they have been provided correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, so that they achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. This is the balanced approach taught by Islam. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 15-16:

"…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path."

The three paths have been made clear in the main verses under discussion. The two extreme paths which lead to a lack of peace of mind in both worlds and the single correct one. It is now up to people to decide which path they desire to journey down, as each person will face the consequences of their choices and actions in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 202:

"Those will have a share of what they have earned, and Allāh is swift in account."

One must bear in mind that once they reach the hereafter, they will be no second chances to correct their attitude and behaviour. If one fails to choose the correct path in this world, they will lead a stressful life in this world and

they will be left empty handed and full of regrets in the hereafter. Chapter 89 Al Fajr, verses 23-24:

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life."”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 202:

“Those will have a share of what they have earned, and Allāh is swift in account.”

This verse also reminds muslims of actualizing their faith. A verbal declaration of faith without acts of obedience to Allah, the Exalted, has very little value in Islam, as people will be judged according to their actions on Judgement Day, and whether these actions were connected to faith or not. Good deeds which support one’s verbal declaration of faith are the currency required to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 43:

"…And they will be called, "This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do.""

Faith is like a fruit plant which only produces fruits when it obtains nourishment, such as sunlight. If the plant fails to obtain nourishment it will not produce the fruit which makes it useful. Similarly, actions are the fruit of a person's faith and without them a person's faith has very little value in Islam. Therefore, one must understand that Islam involves internal faith which is supported by physical actions of obedience. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Faith without good actions or good actions without faith is not Islam, irrespective of what ignorant people may claim. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 85:

"And whoever desires other than Islām as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 202:

“Those will have a share of what they have earned, and Allāh is swift in account.”

Generally speaking, this verse also reminds muslims that each person will obtain mercy and peace of mind in both worlds according to their efforts. Meaning, if a person decides to adopt a lazy attitude, then they will receive the minimal blessings and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. But those who strive hard in using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, according to Islamic teachings, will obtain an uncountable amount of divine support, blessings and mercy in both worlds. It is strange how muslims desire the support of Allah, the Exalted, in every situation yet fail to fulfil their side of the agreement by striving hard in His obedience to obtain the support they desire. A muslim must therefore remember that they will obtain goodness in both worlds according to their efforts. If they put in the minimal effort into pleasing Allah, the Exalted, they should not expect much back from Him. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allāh, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds muslims again of the importance of fulfilling their spiritual training which is in the form of religious rituals, such as the obligatory prayers, so that they adopt the correct mindset throughout their daily activities. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 203:

“And remember Allāh during [specific] numbered days…”

When one performs the religious rituals correctly, they will gain the spiritual training needed to maintain their sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, throughout their days and nights, even when they are not performing religious rituals. This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Allah, the Exalted, then outlines an important Islamic principle through a specific example. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 203:

“…Then whoever hastens [his departure] in two days - there is no sin upon him; and whoever delays [until the third] - there is no sin upon him - for him who fears Allāh…”

Specifically, this verse refers to staying an extra day in a particular place during the Holy Pilgrimage. But generally, it indicates that it is the fear of Allah, the Exalted, the essence of which is possessing a good intention to please Him, is what is required in Islam after the minimal obligations are fulfilled. Meaning, it is perfectly acceptable to adhere to the minimal obligations and the established traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in performing the religious rituals instead of offering many voluntary acts of worship, as long as the muslim possesses the right intention, performs the rituals according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and strives to maintain their obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in the rest of their daily activities. Islam is not about overburdening oneself with voluntary religious acts but it is about fulfilling the minimal obligatory duties and sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in Islamic teachings. This is how one fears Allah, the Exalted, even if they perform the minimal religious rituals.

A muslim is then reminded to maintain a good intention of pleasing Allah, the Exalted, in all their activities, and supporting this with physical acts of obedience as they will be held accountable for all their intentions and actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 203:

“…And fear Allāh and know that unto Him you will be gathered.”

As long as one holds onto the fear of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outline in Islamic teachings, they will obtain peace of mind in this world and prepare

adequately for their final judgement in the hereafter. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 203:

"…And fear Allāh and know that unto Him you will be gathered."

The command of fearing Allah, the Exalted, at the end of the verses discussing the Holy Pilgrimage indicates the importance of continuing to obey Allah, the Exalted, throughout one's normal day to day activities and the importance of avoiding the negative characteristics and actions which can destroy the reward they have obtained during the Holy Pilgrimage. A person will be rewarded in the hereafter according to the good deeds they take to Judgement Day, not the good deeds they performed during their lives, as a person can easily destroy the reward of a good deed by adopting negative characteristics, such as pride, or destroy the reward through sins. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 160:

“Whoever comes [on the Day of Judgment] with a good deed…”

Islamic knowledge is required in order to avoid the things which can destroy the reward of the good deeds they have performed. Therefore, one must dedicate some time of their day to learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 203:

“…And fear Allāh and know that unto Him you will be gathered.”

As this part of the verse commands people to know they will be held accountable for all their actions, it indicates the importance of obtaining certainty of faith. Certain faith is obtained when one learns and acts on Islamic teachings, which discuss the clear proofs of Islam, the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and the inevitability of Judgement Day. The stronger one’s faith, the more they will prepare for their final judgement in the hereafter by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. From this, one can assess how strong their faith in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgement Day truly is. The weaker one’s faith, the less they will use the blessings they have been granted correctly. One should constantly assess their faith in this manner in order to strengthen it, through learning and acting

on Islamic knowledge so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 15-16:

"…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path."

Whereas, the one who possesses weak faith in Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability on Judgement Day will occasionally obey Allah, the Exalted, such as performing the five obligatory daily prayers, but they will struggle to obey Him throughout their daily activities, as they will misuse the blessings they have been granted. They will also often fail to maintain their obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in times of difficulty. This attitude will only lead to stress, difficulties, and trouble in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 11:

"And of the people is he who worships Allah on an edge. If he is touched by good, he is reassured by it; but if he is struck by trial, he turns on his face. He has lost [this] world and the Hereafter. That is what is the manifest loss."

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 204-206

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُۥ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهِدُ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِى قَلْبِهِۦ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ ٱلْخِصَامِ ﴿٢٠٤﴾

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ ٱلْحَرْثَ وَٱلنَّسْلَ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ ٱلْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ ٱتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ ٱلْعِزَّةُ بِٱلْإِثْمِ ۚ فَحَسْبُهُۥ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَلَبِئْسَ ٱلْمِهَادُ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

“And of the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the fiercest of opponents.

And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allah does not like corruption.

And when it is said to him, "Fear Allah," pride in the sin takes hold of him. Sufficient for him is Hellfire, and how wretched is the resting place.”

Allah, the Exalted, criticizes the two-faced artificial person whose aim is to only please people in order to achieve worldly things, such as wealth, gifts and leadership. A two-faced person will change their speech and actions in order to please the people they are conversing with. This attitude always leads to others sins, such as lying. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4873, that the one who possesses two tongues in this world will have two tongues of fire in the hereafter. In addition, it is only a matter of time before the two-faced person is exposed by Allah, the Exalted, in this world and then they will become despised by everyone they aimed to please with their attitude. In addition, this person is extremely good in beautifying worldly things, such as earning wealth, and they dedicate all their efforts to learning, speaking and striving for the sake of worldly gain and they encourage others to do the same with the intention to only benefit themself and not to benefit others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 204:

"*And of the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life…"*

Even though it is lawful to discuss useful worldly matters with others yet this must not be the only aim of a person in their day to day activities. The one who adopts this attitude or accompanies such a person will only ever think, worry and strive after the material world and they will pay little attention to the hereafter and practically preparing for it, as they worldly attitude will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This is the person whose ultimate goal in life is to achieve worldly things, such as wealth and properties. Whereas, the one who is rightly guided aims for the hereafter and practically prepares for it. This alone leads to peace of mind in both worlds, as preparing for the hereafter will encourage one to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in

the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 204:

"*And of the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life…"*

This also describes the person who is good at talking about useful worldly things but fails to support their words with actions. Just like words without actions have very little value in Islam, so do they have little value in worldly matters also. A person who talks but fails to support it with actions will not achieve worldly success nor will they aid others in achieving it either. This is just like a student who talks about studying for their exams yet fails to actually study and therefore fails. One should avoid this attitude as it does not lead to anything good and also causes others to lose respect for them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 204:

“*And of the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life…”*

This also describes the person whose knowledge only consists of worldly knowledge and they are completely ignorant of Islamic knowledge. Even though, learning useful worldly knowledge is praiseworthy, none the less, every muslim must learn and act on Islamic knowledge, as only this can teach one how to use the blessings they have been granted correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Worldly knowledge, irrespective of how much one gains, can never teach someone how to use the blessings they have been granted correctly. As a result, this person will inevitably misuse the blessings they have been granted, as they lack Islamic knowledge. This only leads to stress, trouble and difficulties in both worlds, even if they achieve worldly success, as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted, over their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

One must therefore avoid this outcome by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

Another sign of a two-faced artificial person is that they often take oaths and make promises on how sincere they are to other people without demonstrating it in their actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 204:

“And of the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life, and he calls Allāh to witness as to what is in his heart…”

A truly sincere person proves their sincerity to others through actions, not just words. The one who fails to show it through their actions does not possess sincerity for others and in order to convince people otherwise they often take oaths on how sincere and honest they are. One must therefore avoid this attitude and instead prove their sincerity to Allah, the Exalted, and people through their actions. They should also avoid the company of people who behave in this manner, who have a habit of making promises over little things just to convince people of their sincerity and honesty. The fact is that an honest person does not need to make promises or take oaths in order to convince others of their sincerity and truthfulness.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 204:

"And of the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life, and he calls Allāh to witness as to what is in his heart…"

This also describes the person who adopts negative characteristics yet declares that their spiritual heart is pure. This is a foolish attitude as the speech and actions of a person reflects what is in their spiritual heart. If a person's spiritual heart is corrupted with negative characteristics, such as pride, jealousy and greed, then this will reflect in their speech and actions, even if this display is subtle. Whereas, the one whose spiritual heart is pure as they have adopted good characteristics, such as sincerity, generosity and gratitude, will reflect these positive characteristics in their speech and

actions. Therefore, every person must assess their speech and actions in order to determine whether they possess a corrupt spiritual heart or a pure one and if necessary take the steps required to purify their spiritual heart. This is achieved by learning Islamic knowledge and adopting the good characteristics mentioned therein and avoiding the negative characteristics mentioned therein.

Even though this person attempts to reassure people that they are honest and sincere towards them through promises and oaths yet they only ever fulfil their word when it suits their desires. If their promises and oaths challenge their desires then they will completely oppose others and what is beneficial for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 204:

"…and he calls Allāh to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the fiercest of opponents."

This attitude indicates how insincere they are to others. A muslim must strive to aid others in things which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, according to their means, such as emotional, physical and financial support, in order to please Allah, the Exalted, even if it contradicts their desires. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

The one who is insincere to others will only ever act in ways pleasing to themself. This will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as their social influence and wealth. This only leads to the spread of corruption within society and the destruction of things which benefit people. This is obvious to appreciate when one observes the vast majority of politicians and how their insincerity leads to corruption and the hinderance of what benefits the people within their society. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 205:

"And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals…"

This is the reason why being sincere to others through one's words and actions is so important and is therefore a vital aspect of Islam. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 196, that being sincere to the general public, amongst others, is the very definition of Islam. One must therefore avoid behaving in an insincere way to others as it will only lead to the spread of corruption within society, which in turn attracts the displeasure of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 205:

"…And Allāh does not like corruption."

The one who attracts the displeasure of Allah, the Exalted, will not obtain peace of mind or success, as the very worldly things they obtain will become a source of stress, difficulties and misery for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 204:

"…and he calls Allāh to witness as to what is in his heart, yet he is the fiercest of opponents."

This is connected to another important topic. It is when a person possesses a good intention, which is to please Allah, the Exalted, but fails to support it with good actions. Instead, they act on and teach others things which contradict the teachings of Islam, such as cultural practices. As they have accepted ignorance of Islamic knowledge as their path, their good intention is not good enough to ensure they do the good required in Islam to obtain peace of mind and fulfil their duties towards others. Islam teaches that one must adopt a good intention, which is to please Allah, the Exalted, and couple this with good actions, which are based on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. One without the other is not good enough. This is why it has been said that the path to Hell is lined with good intentions. Therefore, a muslim must avoid this misguided attitude by adopting a good intention and supporting it with good actions in all their affairs.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 204:

"…yet he is the fiercest of opponents."

This also describes the extremely quarrelsome person who will argue with others whenever their own desires and opinions are challenged, even if they

are certain that the opinion of the one who they are arguing with is the correct point of view. It is the duty of a muslim to offer their good advice and opinion to others according to Islamic knowledge in a gentle manner, in both worldly and religious manners. They must not argue or debate with others after presenting their point of view. They cannot force people to accept their opinion as people are free to make their own choices in life. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was the greatest human teacher yet he was commanded to present the truth to others in a kind manner but never to force his opinions on other people. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verses 21-22:

"So remind you are only a reminder. You are not over them a controller."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 205:

“And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals…”

It is important to note that Islam always teaches muslims to spread good within society, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, according to Islamic teachings, such as their wealth and social influence. If they cannot spread good within society, by supporting others in things which are pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, the minimum they can do is avoid hindering good within society. Sadly, they are

muslims which strive hard to prevent good from spreading within society, as it challenges their desires and due to the envy they possess for those who are trying to spread the good within society. A muslim must therefore aim to spread good within society whenever they have the opportunity to do so and at the least they must avoid hindering it, as remaining neutral is better than this.

Allah, the Exalted, then highlights the arrogance of this misguided person who refuses to accept good advice as it contradicts their desires. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 206:

“And when it is said to him, "Fear Allāh," pride in the sin takes hold of him…”

The one who refuses to accept good advice will never obtain right guidance and as a result they will walk the path which leads to their destruction in both worlds. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 265, that the one who possesses even an atom’s worth of pride will go to Hell. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 206:

“And when it is said to him, "Fear Allāh," pride in the sin takes hold of him. Sufficient for him is Hellfire, and how wretched is the resting place.”

Pride is therefore vital to avoid as it prevents one from reforming themself for the better so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which is the path of peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 15-16:

"…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 205-206:

"And when he goes away, he strives throughout the land to cause corruption therein and destroy crops and animals. And Allāh does not like corruption. And when it is said to him, "Fear Allāh,"…"

This also indicates that the major thing which prevents the spread of corruption within society is the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and being held accountable on the Day of Judgement. The other major thing which prevents corruption from spreading within society is the law. But when one believes they can escape the law of the land then it is the fear of Allah, the Exalted, alone which will prevent them from spreading corruption, which involves misusing the blessings they have been granted, such as wealth and social

influence. The fear of Allah, the Exalted, is strengthened through learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one firmly understands they cannot escape the consequences of their actions in this world or in the next through the many examples and clear proofs discussed within Islamic teachings. From these verses, one can determine how much they truly fear Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability on Judgement Day, as the more one misuses the blessings they have been granted, the less they fear Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability in the hereafter.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 207

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِى نَفْسَهُ ٱبْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱللَّهُ رَءُوفٌۢ بِٱلْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠٧﴾

"And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking the approval of Allah. And Allah is Kind to [His] servants."

In this verse, Allah, the Exalted, indicates the path of peace of mind and success in both worlds. This path involves using the blessings one has been granted, the internal blessings, such as one's physical energy, and the external blessings, such as their wealth, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 207:

"*And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking the approval of Allah…"*

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings leads to peace of mind in both worlds as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the affairs of the universe, including the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind. Therefore, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind and who does not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

Secondly, as peace of mind is obtained through a balanced mental and physical state, no matter how much knowledge people obtain when it comes to the mental and physical well-being of humans, they will never be able to obtain enough knowledge to construct a perfect code of conduct which allows them to obtain a perfectly balanced mental and physical state which in turn leads to peace of mind and body. This is simply not possible, as people’s knowledge is extremely limited and as their lack foresight, they do not know the future consequences of their choices. The only One who knows all these things and more is Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, He alone is in the best position to advise a code of conduct for people, the people He created, to follow which leads to a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind. Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 14:

“Does He who created not know? while He is the Subtle, the Aware?”

Therefore, the only code of conduct which will leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds, is the code of conduct given by Allah, the Exalted, which is Islam. This code of conduct is a part of the kindness mentioned at the end of the main verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 207:

“…And Allah is Kind to [His] servants.”

A person must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

But if a person decides to ignore the code of conduct of Islam and instead misuses the blessings they have been granted, then they will obtain am imbalanced mental and physical state, which will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, a person must use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, if they desire to avoid a depressed life in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 207:

"*And of the people is he who sells himself, seeking the approval of Allah…"*

Everyone sells themselves, as each person uses the blessings they have been granted, one way or another. As discussed, the key to peace of mind is to use the blessings correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This also indicates the importance of sincerity towards Allah, the Exalted. The one who acts in order to please anyone except Allah, the Exalted, or acts to please Him with others, will not gain any reward from Allah, the Exalted, in either this world or in the next, as Allah, the Exalted, rewards those who do good deeds in order to only please Him. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 110:

"…So whoever would hope for the meeting with his Lord - let him do righteous work and not associate in the worship of his Lord anyone."

One should seek the approval of Allah, the Exalted, in all their religious and worldly affairs, such as raising their children, by using the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings. A positive sign of a good intention is that one does not expect nor hope for gratitude or appreciation from any person. Whereas, the one who acts in order to please people should know, they will never be able to please people completely, as they are fickle by nature and become easily displeased with others and the insincere person will not please Allah, the Exalted, either. Whereas, the one who aims to please Allah, the Exalted, will easily please Him, as everything He asks for is easy to do and completely benefits the doer. And Allah, the Exalted, will protect the sincere person from the negative effects of people, even if this is not obvious to them. This is another act of the kindness of Allah, the Exalted, towards those who adopt sincerity to Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 207:

“…And Allah is Kind to [His] servants.”

To conclude, it is vital to understand that obtaining peace of mind in both worlds involves more than the minimal daily and annual obligations of Islam, such as the five daily obligatory prayers. Even though this minimum is vital to establish one’s faith but peace of mind is only obtained when one strives to use every blessing they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 13 Ar Ra’d, verse 28:

“…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

Failing to understand this truth is a major reason why many muslims who fulfil the basic obligatory duties of Islam struggle to obtain peace of mind.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 208-209

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱدْخُلُوا۟ فِى ٱلسِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾

فَإِن زَلَلْتُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْكُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتُ فَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٩﴾

"O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.

But if you slip [deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise."

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Just like a fruit bearing tree is only useful when it produces fruit, similarly, faith is only useful when it produces good actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 208:

"*O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly]…"*

This indicates that a muslim must combine both parts of Islam meaning, internal faith supported by outward actions. These actions involve using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, the very definition of a muslim is the one who has physically submitted to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, there is no such thing as a muslim who does not practice Islam, as failing to practice on Islam contradicts the very definition of the word muslim. The main verse also warns muslims of avoiding the attitude whereby they pick and choose what aspects of Islam to follow and which ones to ignore, depending on their desires. This is the person who treats Islam like a coat and therefore puts it on and takes it off whenever they desire. This person does not obey or worship Allah, the Exalted, instead, they only obey and worship their own desires. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

"Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?..."

In fact, picking and choosing what parts of Islam to follow and ignore has been described as disbelieving in parts of divine revelation, even though a muslim may claim to believe in the entire Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 84-85:

“And [recall] when We took your covenant, [saying], "Do not shed your [i.e., each other's] blood or evict one another from your homes." Then you acknowledged [this] while you were witnessing. Then, you are those [same ones who are] killing one another and evicting a party of your people from their homes, cooperating against them in sin and aggression. And if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, although their eviction was forbidden to you. So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allāh is not unaware of what you do.”

The one who therefore picks and chooses what to follow of Islamic teachings according to their desires, is only inviting disgrace upon themself in both worlds. The very worldly things they obtain by compromising on Islamic teachings will become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. And as their attitude will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, it will further increase their trouble, stress and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

The one who picks and chooses which Islamic teachings to follow or ignore according to their desires is following in the footsteps of their sworn enemy, the Devil, as he was the first person to behave in this manner, when he rejected the command of Allah, the Exalted, to show respect to the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 208:

“O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”

The one who follows the footsteps of the Devil will never obtain peace of mind and success in either this world or the next.

Another aspect of following the footsteps of the Devil is when one acts on religious innovations which are not rooted in the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, even if they lead to good deeds, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the main verse under discussion was specifically revealed when a group of Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were formerly Jews or Christians, desired to continue acting on the teachings of their former religion which did not contradict Islamic teachings. This has been discussed in Tafsir Al Qurtubi, Volume 1, Page 531. In addition, the more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge the more they will begin to act on things which contradict the teachings of Islam. This is how the Devil leads people astray, step by step. For example, a person facing difficulties will be advised to perform certain spiritual exercises which contradict and challenge the teachings of Islam. As this person is ignorant and has a habit of acting on other sources of religious knowledge, they will easily fall into this trap and begin to perform spiritual exercises that directly challenge the teachings of Islam. They will even begin to believe things about Allah, the Exalted, and the universe which contradict the teachings of Islam also, such as believing people or supernatural creatures can control their destiny, as their knowledge is taken from other than the two sources of guidance. Some of these misguided practices and beliefs are clear disbelief, such as practicing black magic. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 102:

“…It was not Solomon who disbelieved, but the devils disbelieved, teaching people magic and that which was revealed to the two angels at Babylon, Hārūt and Mārūt. But they [i.e., the two angels] do not teach anyone unless they say, "We are a trial, so do not disbelieve [by practicing magic]."…”

So a muslim can lose their faith without even realizing it, as they have the habit of acting on other sources of religious knowledge. This is why acting on religious innovations which are not rooted in the two sources of guidance is following in the footsteps of the Devil. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 208:

“O you who have believed, enter into Islam completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”

As indicated in verse 209, the key to avoiding following in the footsteps of the Devil is to learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The more one does this, the more they will use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This leads to protection from the Devil and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 42:

“Indeed, My servants - no authority will you have over them, except those who follow you of the deviators.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

And chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 15-16:

"…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 209:

"*But if you slip [deviate] after clear proofs have come to you…"*

Therefore, no person is left with any excuses, as the clear proofs of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, have been granted to mankind and are, in this day and age, easily accessible to most people. The one who ignores learning and acting on Islamic teachings will not escape the power of Allah, the Exalted, and they will face the consequences of their choice and actions in both worlds. This is a major reason why many muslims fail to obtain peace of mind, as they fail to learn and act on Islamic teachings so that they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. As Allah, the Exalted, controls their spiritual hearts, the abode of peace of mind, they will never find peace of mind. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

"And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 209:

"But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might…"

But as Allah, the Exalted, is also All Wise, He alone can provide the code of conduct needed for people to achieve protection from the Devil and his many traps so that people can obtain peace of mind. This code of conduct is based on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet

Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, as they know it is best for their mental and physical well-being, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. But in this case, a human doctor can make mistakes whereas Allah, the Exalted, is All Wise, and accepting and acting on what He has prescribed will only ever lead to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 209:

"But if you slip [i.e., deviate] after clear proofs have come to you, then know that Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise."

And chapter 10 Yunus, verse 57:

"O mankind, there has come to you instruction from your Lord and healing for what is in the breasts and guidance and mercy for the believers."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 210-212

هَلْ يَنظُرُونَ إِلَّآ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ فِى ظُلَلٍ مِّنَ ٱلْغَمَامِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ وَقُضِىَ ٱلْأَمْرُ ۚ وَإِلَى ٱللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ ٱلْأُمُورُ ﴿٢١٠﴾

سَلْ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ كَمْ ءَاتَيْنَٰهُم مِّنْ ءَايَةٍۭ بَيِّنَةٍ ۗ وَمَن يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ ٱللَّهِ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعِقَابِ ﴿٢١١﴾

زُيِّنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ ٱلْحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ۘ وَٱلَّذِينَ ٱتَّقَوْا۟ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢١٢﴾

“Do they await but that Allah should come to them in covers of clouds and the angels [as well] and the matter is [then] decided? And to Allah [all] matters are returned.

“Ask the Children of Israel how many a sign of evidence We have given them. And whoever exchanges the favor of Allah after it has come to him - then indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.

Beautified for those who disbelieve is the life of this world, and they ridicule those who believe. But those who fear Allah are above them on the Day of Resurrection. And Allah gives provision to whom He wills without account.”

Allah, the Exalted, warns against procrastinating when it comes to sincerely obeying Him, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 210:

"*Do they await but that Allah should come to them in covers of clouds and the angels [as well] and the matter is [then] decided? And to Allah [all] matters are returned."*

One of the greatest traps of the Devil is to encourage people to delay practically preparing for the hereafter and their accountability. He encourages them to focus on acquiring and beautifying the material world and to concentrate all their efforts and resources on their worldly matters. This attitude will always encourage one to misuse the blessings they have been granted on vain and sinful things. Therefore, the Devil achieves his purpose of depriving people peace of mind in this world and in the next. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In order to avoid falling for this trap of the Devil of delaying practically preparing for the hereafter and one's inevitable accountability, they must strengthen their faith through learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. When one studies the countless signs and clear proofs discussed within Islamic teachings which clearly indicate the temporal nature of life in this world, they will be encouraged to not delay practically preparing for their accountability in the hereafter. For example, Allah, the Exalted, indicates a reality that no one, irrespective of their faith can deny. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 45:

"And on the Day when He will gather them, [it will be] as if they had not remained [in the world] but an hour of the day…"

Irrespective of a person's age, every person will admit that their life so far has gone by in a moment. Therefore, irrespective of how many more years they have left on this Earth, it will only ever be a moment. This is a reality which is often discussed within Islamic teachings. In addition, Islamic teachings will truly convince someone that unlike in this world, there are no second chances in the hereafter. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 35:

"That is because you took the verses of Allāh in ridicule, and worldly life deluded you." So that Day they will not be removed from it, nor will they be asked to appease [Allāh]."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 210:

“*Do they await but that Allah should come to them in covers of clouds and the angels [as well] and the matter is [then] decided?...”*

In this world, in some form or shape, a person does get a second chance. For example, a divorcee can get re-married to someone else and as a result gets a second chance at marriage. This reality of second chances in this world fools people into believing that somehow they will be given a second chance in the hereafter also. But those who study and act on Islamic teachings become firm on the truth that there is no second chances in the hereafter and they therefore must practically prepare for it in this world.

In addition, the one who learns and acts on Islamic teachings will become convinced that all their intentions, speech and actions will directly influence their well-being in this world and in the next, as all matters return to Allah, the Exalted, for His judgement in this world and the next. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 210:

“…*And to Allah [all] matters are returned.”*

This person becomes convinced that if they desire peace of mind in both worlds, something all people desire, then it can only be achieved through sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, as He alone controls the affairs of the universe, including the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This attitude alone will ensure one obtains peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who persists on delaying practically preparing for their inevitable accountability by misusing the blessings they have been granted will be deprived of peace of mind in both worlds and they will instead be left with nothing but regrets, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

And chapter 89 Al Fajr, verses 23-24:

“And brought [within view], that Day, is Hell - that Day, man will remember, but how [i.e., what good] to him will be the remembrance? He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead [some good] for my life."”

A person must therefore avoid delaying practically preparing for their accountability in the hereafter, as the their time of death is unknown and irrespective of how long they live, their life will go by in a moment. In addition, the one who decides to prepare practically when they become elderly should know that an older person often becomes stubborn in their habit and behaviour and finds it much harder to change for the better, even if they try to learn and act on Islamic teachings. Instead, one must fulfil their worldly needs and responsibilities according to Islamic teachings, as this is a good deed which will aid them on Judgement Day, but also dedicate some time to learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they use the blessings they have been granted, such as their

wealth, time and energy, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace of mind in both this world and the next.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 210:

"*Do they await but that Allah should come to them in covers of clouds and the angels [as well] and the matter is [then] decided? And to Allah [all] matters are returned."*

This verse also criticizes those who claim they will not accept and act on Islamic teachings until all matters, such as the unseen things, such as the Angels, become visible and clear to them. This is a foolish attitude as faith has real value when it consists of believing in certain unseen realities without perceiving them through the five senses, such as seeing Allah, the Exalted. But even then, these unseen elements are supported by many proofs and indicators within the Heavens and the Earth. For example, the presence of a painting indicates a painter. The presence of the creation indicates a Creator, especially when the creation is perfectly created. In addition, there are countless worldly things where a person fails to perceive them yet they use them without complaining. For example, countless people take medicine without perceiving or understanding how the medicine works within the human body. Even though the code of conduct granted to mankind through Islam is completely based on evidence and common sense, none the less, some other aspects of Islam are based on unseen things, as this gives value to faith. This is why the claim to faith of a person who witnesses the unseen elements, such as the Angels, will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, as believing in these unseen things when they become witnessed is nothing special.

People’s test lies in whether they accept reality even though they cannot perceive it directly through their senses and whether, after having accepted it, they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, even though they have the energy and ability to disobey Him. In sending the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and in revealing the divine scriptures Allah, the Exalted, has always taken care to leave scope for testing people’s power of judgement and their obedience to Him. He has never disclosed reality to such a degree that people would be inevitably compelled to accept it. For if that were done nothing would remain to be tested and the very idea of people’s success or failure would be meaningless. Therefore, this verse points out that people should not keep waiting for Allah, the Exalted, and His Angels to appear before them. If that were to happen it would mark the end of everything and there would be no occasion left for people to decide anything. To believe and to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, are of value only so long as the reality is presented in such a way as to make its rejection possible. If the truth were to be fully disclosed and if people were to see the unseen elements of the universe and the hereafter their faith and obedience would not be worth much. If all these things were physically observable not even the most stubborn unbelievers and the worst sinners would disbelieve or disobey. Acceptance of faith and obedience has value only as long as there remains a veil over reality. The moment when reality is totally unveiled would mark the end of the period granted to people to decide and of their testing period. This moment is the Day of Judgement.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 210:

“*Do they await but that Allah should come to them in covers of clouds and the angels [as well] and the matter is [then] decided? And to Allah [all] matters are returned.”*

This verse obviously refers to the Day of Judgement and its inevitable nature. As discussed earlier, one must accept its reality and strive to prepare practically for it. They must not delve into the specific things mentioned in this verse, such as the coming of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day, as His being cannot be fathomed by any creature. Any attempt to discuss or explain this will never do justice to Allah, the Exalted, and should therefore be avoided. In addition, as this or similar things about Allah, the Exalted, will not be questioned about on Judgement Day, one should instead concentrate on discussing, researching and studying the things which will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as their speech, actions and responsibilities. Sadly, many educated muslims dedicate their time to discussing these topics instead of concentrating on what Allah, the Exalted, wants them to concentrate on. In respect to this verse, Allah, the Exalted, does not want people to concentrate on how exactly He will come on the Day of Judgement to judge the actions of people but to instead concentrate on practically preparing for their accountability. Allah, the Exalted, mentioned Himself in this verse in order to magnify the seriousness of the Day of Judgement, not so people delve into the finer details of what has been said about Him and His coming on the Day of Judgement.

The warning against delaying practically preparing for the Day of Judgement is then directed at the people of the book as they had no reason to delay practically preparing for the Day of Judgement as their ancestors, the children of Israel, had been granted countless miraculous signs which they knew about and were proud of. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 210-211:

“Do they await but that Allāh should come to them in covers of clouds and the angels [as well] and the matter is [then] decided? And to Allāh [all] matters are returned. Ask the Children of Israel how many a sign of evidence We have given them…”

As discussed earlier, Allah, the Exalted, has granted many signs within Islamic teachings which indicate the speed at which life passes by and how one should therefore practically prepare for the Day of Judgement instead of delaying.

In addition, the people of the book went further as many of their scholars openly denied Islam even though they clearly recognized the Holy Quran, as they were familiar with its Author, Allah, the Exalted. In addition, both the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Holy Quran had been discussed within their divine scriptures also. Chapter 6 Al An’am, verse 20:

“Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

They intentionally edited, misinterpreted and concealed the knowledge within their divine scriptures which discussed the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as Islam directly challenged their way of life and would prevent them from misusing the blessings they had been granted for the sake of worldly gain, such as wealth and leadership. In addition, as their faith was deeply rooted in lineage, especially the Jewish faith, they could not accept or follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as he was not from their lineage, the children of Israel. Accepting and following him would have destroyed their false claim of being the superior race as they were the descendants of the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him. This, they could not accept to do.

They therefore exchanged the clear signs granted to them which should have encouraged them to accept Islam and therefore practically prepare for the Day of Judgement but they chose to pursue their worldly desires instead. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 211:

"Ask the Children of Israel how many a sign of evidence We have given them. And whoever exchanges the favor of Allāh after it has come to him - then indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty."

Muslims must therefore avoid following the footsteps of the people of the book by intentionally misinterpreting or ignoring Islamic teachings so that they can misuse the blessings they have been granted for the sake of worldly gain. They must understand that they cannot escape the power

and control of Allah, the Exalted, even if this is not obvious to them in this world. The very worldly things they obtain by compromising on their faith, such as wealth, fame and leadership, will become a source of stress, misery and difficulties in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

In addition, their worldly punishment will only increase when they begin to blame the wrong people and things within their lives for the mental health issues they face, such as depression. As a result, they will cut these good people and things out of their lives, such as their spouse, which will only increase their mental health issues until they become lost in depression, substance addiction and suicidal tendencies. This outcome is quite obvious when one observes the rich and famous and how misusing the blessings they have been granted leads to this outcome. And the punishment that is waiting in the hereafter is even more severe, unless one sincerely repents. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 211:

“…*And whoever exchanges the favor of Allāh after it has come to him - then indeed, Allāh is severe in penalty.”*

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Many people fall for the beauty of this world and as a result misuse the blessings they have been granted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 212:

“Beautified for those who disbelieve is the life of this world…”

Even though non-muslims are mentioned in this verse, it can still apply to a muslim when they adopt the attitude and character of a non-muslim. Therefore, even if Islamic teachings challenge the worldly desires of a person they must still accept and act on it for the sake of their own mental and physical well-being. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict

diet plan. But just like this patient will be left with poor mental and physical health if they ignore the advice of their doctor, so will the person who ignores the teachings of Islam and fails to act on them practically.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 212:

“Beautified for those who disbelieve is the life of this world…”

As this part of the verse is in the passive form, the one who beautified the material world has not been mentioned. It can include Allah, the Exalted, who intentionally beautified the material world for mankind in order to test them. The test being whether or not they will use the worldly blessings they have been granted correctly, in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 7:

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is better in deed.”

The material world is also beautified by the Devil and one’s inner Devil, as they work together in order to encourage one to misuse the blessings they have been granted so that they obtain stress and misery in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 208:

“O you who have believed, enter into Islām completely [and perfectly] and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy.”

The material world is also beautified by other people, social media, fashion and culture. These things will wrongfully teach people that real success and peace of mind lie in fulfilling one’s worldly desires which involves misusing the blessings they have been granted. Therefore, the test is whether one will follow the right guidance and clear proofs granted by Allah, the Exalted, which encourages them to use the blessings they have been granted correctly or whether they follow these worldly things and therefore misuse the blessings they have been granted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 212:

“Beautified for those who disbelieve is the life of this world…”

A muslim can overcome the beauty of the material world which encourages them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, by strengthening their faith, which involves learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. This will allow them to understand the real nature and purpose of this world. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 7:

“Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is better in deed.”

The one who understands the purpose and nature of this world is more likely to act correctly within it. They will not abandon the material world nor will they misuse the blessings within it. Instead, they will use the worldly blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to strengthen their faith will fail to understand the purpose of this world and as a result, they will misuse the blessings they have been granted.

Strong faith allows one to observe and understand the positive consequences of using the worldly blessings they have been granted correctly. Whereas, the one who has weak faith will not be able to observe the negative consequences of misusing the blessings they have been granted. The difference between the one who has strong faith and the one who possesses weak faith in respect to this world is similar to two people who are given a poisoned meal which appears delicious, such as chocolate cake. The one who has strong faith rooted in knowledge will

recognize the poison and therefore abstain from the meal. Whereas, the one who possesses weak faith will fail to recognize the poison and as a result they will happily eat the meal while failing to recognize the consequences of their choice. The one who possesses strong faith recognizes what will benefit them in this world and what will poison them, even if it appears beautiful. As a result, they will benefit from the world without being harmed by it. Whereas, the one who possesses weak faith will fail to differentiate between the worldly things which benefit them from those things which harm them. As a result, they will harm their own mental and physical well-being in both worlds. The one who possesses weak faith will also criticize the one who possesses strong faith believing they are foolish for abstaining from certain worldly things and for using the worldly things they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, instead of fulfilling their own desires. The root of their criticism is ignorance of the nature and purpose of this world. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 212:

"Beautified for those who disbelieve is the life of this world, and they ridicule those who believe…"

When muslims adopt the character and attitude of non-muslims, then they too behave in this manner towards those who truly believe in Islam through their actions. Sadly, this criticism often comes from one's relatives whenever a person tries harder to learn and act on Islamic teachings. In situations like this, this muslim must persevere in their dedication to learning and acting on Islamic teachings as Allah, the Exalted, will compensate the lack of support they receive from others in a way which is unimaginable. Through the support of Allah, the Exalted, this muslim will become independent of all others, especially those who criticized them for their dedication to Islam and they will be granted peace of mind.

As discussed earlier, the one who possesses weak faith is like a patient who rejects the medical advice of their doctor, as it contradicts their desires and instead continues to fulfil their worldly desires. In the short term, they will experience some fun and entertainment, but in the long term they will suffer from mental and physical problems. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

The one of possesses weak faith will therefore misuse the blessings they have been granted, which will only lead to stress, trouble and difficulties in both worlds, as they cannot escape the control and power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whereas, the one who possesses strong faith is like the wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. This wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health. Similarly, the one who possesses strong faith will accept and act on the

teachings of Islam thereby using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this is best for their mental and physical well-being in both worlds. As a result, they will achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 15-16:

"…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 212:

"Beautified for those who disbelieve is the life of this world, and they ridicule those who believe. But those who fear Allāh are above them on the Day of Resurrection…"

In addition, the one who possesses strong faith will understand that being granted many worldly things by Allah, the Exalted, or having less worldly things is not a sign that Allah, the Exalted, loves or dislikes someone. Whereas, the one who has weak faith will assume they are beloved to Allah, the Exalted, when they are granted worldly things, such as wealth, and as a result, this misguided belief will only encourage them to continue misusing the blessings they have been granted. This in turn will only increase their stress, difficulties and trouble in both worlds. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verses 55-56:

“Do they think that what We extend to them of wealth and children. Is [because] We hasten for them good things? Rather, they do not perceive.”

Worldly blessings are only granted or withheld as a test. The test being whether a person will show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, in times of ease, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Or whether they will show patience in times of difficulties, which involves avoiding complaining with one’s speech or actions and continuing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, knowing He chooses what is best for people, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 2:

“[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is better in deed…”

Only the one who possesses strong faith will understand this reality and therefore behave correctly in both times of ease and difficulties, which in turn leads to blessings and mercy in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7500. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 212:

“…And Allāh gives provision to whom He wills without account.”

Therefore, one must obtain strong faith through learning and acting on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to obtain the benefits discussed and avoid the dangers discussed.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 213-214

كَانَ ٱلنَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلنَّبِيِّـۧنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنزَلَ مَعَهُمُ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ
بِٱلْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ ٱلنَّاسِ فِيمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ وَمَا ٱخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا
جَآءَتْهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتُ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ فَهَدَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لِمَا ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فِيهِ مِنَ ٱلْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِۦ
وَٱللَّهُ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تَدْخُلُوا۟ ٱلْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُم مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ خَلَوْا۟ مِن قَبْلِكُم مَّسَّتْهُمُ ٱلْبَأْسَآءُ
وَٱلضَّرَّآءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَ ٱلرَّسُولُ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مَعَهُۥ مَتَىٰ نَصْرُ ٱللَّهِ أَلَآ إِنَّ نَصْرَ ٱللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ
﴿٢١٤﴾

“Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over it [i.e., the Scripture] except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves. And Allah guided those who believed to the truth concerning that over which they had differed, by His permission. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path.

Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, "When is the help of Allah?" Unquestionably, the help of Allah is near.”

Allah, the Exalted, explains that the overall message of Islam was not something new. In fact, it was an ancient message which had been delivered many times throughout history with the aim of providing humanity with a perfect code of conduct so that they could achieve unity, justice, peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 213:

"*Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed…"*

Unity, justice, peace of mind and success in both worlds cannot be achieved without a divine code of conduct. This is because the knowledge of people in order to obtain these things is too limited and as they have no knowledge of future events they cannot accurately predict the consequences of the code of conduct they design on an individual or the entire society. For example, even to this day mankind have not obtained all the knowledge connected to the human mind and body, then how can they advise a code of conduct which will achieve a balance mental and physical state which leads to peace of mind? The only One who can provide this perfect code of conduct which is designed for the nature of humans, something which is timeless, is the One who created humans and knows all things about them and everything else, namely, Allah, the Exalted. This is a reality which has been proven throughout history. Most of history is full of societies which ignored divine teachings and it is clear how those societies never obtained peace of mind and justice, even if they advanced technologically. Whereas, the few societies in history which implemented divine teachings correctly did achieve justice, unity and peace of mind. In respect to justice and unity within society, a code of conduct created by people will always be bias and favor one group

of people over another, such as favoring the rich over everyone else. In addition, the future consequences of creating and implementing man-made laws within society are unknown due to the short sightedness of people, even if predictions can be made about the effects of new laws on society. The only One who can grant an unbiased code of conduct whereby every law is guaranteed to benefit the wider society, even if this is not obvious to them, is Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 213:

"…*And none differed over it [i.e., the Scripture] except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves…"*

Whenever people chose to pursue their worldly desires, such as gaining wealth and leadership, they intentionally differed, challenged and ignored divine teachings. This lead to disunity and hindered the rest of society from acting on the correct divine teachings, as each jealous scholar intentionally misinterpreted divine teachings in order to create their own faction, so that they could obtain leadership. A muslim must avoid this attitude as it leads to Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verses 52-53:

“And indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear Me. But they [i.e., the people] divided their religion among them into portions [i.e., sects] - each faction, in what it has, rejoicing.”

The previous nations created a hierarchy system within religion so that they could obtain leadership and wealth. They behaved as gatekeepers between Allah, the Exalted, and the general population and made it clear that they could only achieve the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, through blindly following and pleasing them. The muslim nation also behaved in this manner when they were commanded not to fall into disunity and to instead sincerely learn and act on Islamic teachings which would have kept them united. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 105:

“And do not be like the ones who became divided and differed after the clear proofs had come to them. And those will have a great punishment.”

As indicated in the main verse, the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, where guides who showed the correct path which leads to the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. They did not act like gatekeepers who demanded people to please them in order to achieve the closeness of Allah, the Exalted. A muslim must strive to find teachers which have this attitude in order to learn and act on Islamic teachings.

A muslim must avoid the types of scholars that promote their own factions and encourage people to join them and blindly follow their code of conduct. Instead, a muslim must strive to learn and act on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they use the blessings they have been granted correctly and adopt the right mindset which leads to unity within society. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 213:

"…And Allāh guided those who believed to the truth concerning that over which they had differed, by His permission…"

But this guidance is only reserved for those who avoid blindly following others and instead strive to learn and act on Islamic teachings with an open mind. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 213:

"…And Allāh guides whom He wills to a straight path."

And chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

"Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 213:

"…*And none differed over it [i.e., the Scripture] except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves…"*

Jealousy which leads to disunity can be avoided when people, especially scholars and leaders of society, adopt sincerity to Allah, the Exalted. This means, they strive to use the blessings they have been granted, such as social influence and leadership, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This will ensure peace, justice and unity spreads within society. And this is the only way they will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. But if they misuse the blessings they have been granted, then anything they obtain will only become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them in both worlds, as they cannot escape the power of Allah, the Exalted, and facing the consequences of their choices. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

A jealous person must remember that their attitude is directly challenging the decision of Allah, the Exalted, as He alone decides the distribution of worldly blessings to people. The jealous person therefore believes Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake in granting a particular blessing to someone else instead of granting it to them. This is why jealousy is a major sin. A muslim must instead concentrate on using whatever blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, knowing that whatever blessings they have been granted is best for them and whatever other people have been granted is best for them. This will protect them from the evil consequences of jealousy, such as mental stress and punishment in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 213:

“…And none differed over it [i.e., the Scripture] except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves. And Allāh guided those who believed to the truth concerning that over which they had differed, by His permission. And Allāh guides whom He wills to a straight path.”

After the truth was made apparent to every generation through the sending of Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, and divine scripture, the people split into two groups. When this occurred, friction and conflict between them was inevitable therefore, Allah, the Exalted, encourages muslims to remain firm during this conflict, as it is an ancient old battle between faith and disbelief which inevitably occurs in every generation. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 214:

“*Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you?...”*

Unlike many other religions, Islam does not pretend that its followers will be granted Paradise on Earth and Paradise in the hereafter. Instead, it makes it clear that accepting faith comes with tests, as these tests are the only way to make evident who genuinely possesses faith and who does not. Just like tests are used within universities to determine which students genuinely possess the knowledge needed to graduate and which students do not. Even though Allah, the Exalted, already knows who is a genuine believer, yet He does not judge people based on His infinite knowledge, He instead judges people based on their intention and actions. Therefore, tests are required to

make a person’s intention and actions manifest. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 179:

“Allāh would not leave the believers in that [state] you are in [presently] until He separates the evil from the good…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 214:

“*Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you?...”*

In addition, without tests, the purpose of life in this world is not fulfilled. Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 2:

“[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is better in deed…”

Tests allow one to experience both aspects of life: times of ease and times of difficulty. The test is whether one shows gratitude in times of ease and

patience in times of difficulty or not. Gratitude involves sincerely using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It includes adopting a good intention to please Allah, the Exalted, as acting for the sake of people will not be rewarded by Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Gratitude also includes speaking good words or remaining silent. Patience involves avoiding complaining with one's speech or actions and maintaining one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, knowing He chooses what is best. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

As mentioned earlier, Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that facing tests is not unique to the muslims and is something that every person in every generation faced. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 214:

"Or do you think that you will enter Paradise while such [trial] has not yet come to you as came to those who passed on before you? They were touched by poverty and hardship and were shaken until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, "When is the help of Allāh?"…"

Understanding this reality makes facing tests in this world easier, as the entire mankind is subjected to tests in some form. A muslim must therefore avoid a self-centered and self-absorbed attitude whereby they behave as if they are the only one going through difficulties. One must look into history, as well as current times, in order to appreciate all people, especially those closer to Allah, the Exalted, faced difficulties, and in most cases, faced more severe difficulties than them. This will aid one in remaining patient and encourage them to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, for not testing them with greater difficulties. In addition, a person must remember that Allah, the Exalted, does not test people beyond their capacity, so there is no excuse in failing to show patience. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…"

As tests in life are destined they cannot be avoided by anyone. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

"No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allāh, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you and not exult [in pride] over what He has given you…"

Therefore, a person can either show impatience during times of difficulty and lose an uncountable reward or they can experience the difficulty with

patience and obtain an uncountable reward. Either way, they will face the unavoidable difficulty so it makes sense to obtain an uncountable reward with it. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

“…the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

Furthermore, Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear to all people that His aid and support is always close, especially to those who strive to adopt patience and gratitude. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 214:

“…until [even their] messenger and those who believed with him said, "When is the help of Allāh?" Unquestionably, the help of Allāh is near.”

But it is important to note that the help and support of Allah, the Exalted, is always according to His infinite wisdom and knowledge. Therefore, His aid comes at the best time and in the best way for those involved, even if this is not apparent to them. This divine aid in most cases does not come in the way a person expects, as their knowledge of what is best for them is extremely limited. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Sadly, many muslims fail to understand this reality and often criticize destiny and the lack of support from Allah, the Exalted, when help does not come to them according to their wishes. Understanding and accepting this reality is a test in itself which muslims must pass if they desire to maintain patience and gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, so that they achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 215

يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ قُلْ مَآ أَنفَقْتُم مِّنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَٰلِدَيْنِ وَٱلْأَقْرَبِينَ وَٱلْيَتَٰمَىٰ وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينِ
وَٱبْنِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِهِۦ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١٥﴾

“They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him], what they should spend. Say, "Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents and relatives and orphans and the needy and the traveler. And whatever you do of good - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it."”

The beginning of the main verse indicates the importance of researching and studying relevant topics of Islamic and worldly knowledge. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"*They ask you…"*

In respect to religious knowledge, the topics one must research and study are the topics connected to the things Allah, the Exalted, will question people about on Judgement Day, such as how to treat one's neighbour. The topics which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day are not relevant and only waste a person's time. The only one who is in a position to dedicate their energy to irrelevant topics are those who have already act on the relevant topics. As this is virtually impossible to do completely, people must concentrate all their efforts, time and energy to researching and acting on those branches of religious knowledge which will be questioned about on Judgement Day and leave everything else. And example of a relevant topic is then mentioned in the main verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"*They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him], what they should spend…"*

Spending in this case refers to how one uses the blessings they have been granted and therefore includes other things, such as time and energy, not just wealth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

“*They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him], what they should spend. Say, "Whatever you spend of good…”"*

Spending of good refers to using the blessings one has been granted correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Good spending and using the blessings one has been granted is not judged by any other standard, such as fashion, culture or one’s desires. Otherwise, the blessings one has been granted will be misused. This only leads to stress, trouble and difficulties in both worlds even if a person experiences moments of fun and entertainment, as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind

while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whereas, the one who uses the blessings they have been granted correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, according to Islamic teachings, will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, as the One who controls their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, will ensure they obtain it. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

A person must therefore use the blessings they have been granted correctly for their own sake, even if this contradicts their desires. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Just like this wise patient will obtain a healthy mental and physical state, so will the person who accepts and acts on the advice of Islam.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

“*They ask you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him], what they should spend. Say, "Whatever you spend of good…”*”

Spending of good things also indicates obtaining and utilizing lawful things. It is vital to understand that the outward foundation of Islam is obtaining and utilizing lawful things just like the inwards foundation of Islam is one’s intention. If the foundation of a person’s faith is corrupt then everything they do will be corrupt and rejected by Allah, the Exalted, even if they appear as good deeds. A person must avoid unlawful things by remembering that Allah, the Exalted, allocated the provision for the entire creation over fifty thousand years before He created the Heavens and the Earth and this cannot be increased or decreased at all. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Chapter 11 Hud, verse 6:

“And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allāh is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. All is in a clear register.”

Therefore, one must fulfil their half by using the resources they have been granted, such as their energy, to gain lawful provision and trust that Allah, the Exalted, has already guaranteed they will receive their lawful provision as long as they are alive in this world.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"…*Say, "Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents…""*

The foremost goodness must be shown to one's parents as an act of gratitude for raising them. Chapter 31 Luqman, verse 14:

"…Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination."

Even though the source of all blessings is Allah, the Exalted, none the less He often uses other people to convey His blessings to people, such as one's parents. Therefore, showing gratitude to others is an aspect of showing gratitude to Allah, the Exalted. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1954, that whoever is not grateful to people cannot be grateful to Allah, the Exalted. In respect to parents, one must show them the utmost respect at all times and aim to treat them how they themself wish to be treated by their children. This includes aiding them according to their potential, such as financial, emotional and physical aid. Children have permission to disagree with their parents, but this must be done with respect and manners. There is no such thing as blind obedience of parents or anyone else in Islam. They must never obey their parents if it leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and instead should advise them gently to refrain from disobeying Allah, the Exalted. It is important to note, that a child must fulfill the rights of their parents according to the teachings of Islam for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, not according to the standards set by culture,

fashion, social media or society, as these standards often contradict the standard set by Allah, the Exalted. They must not be bothered about the criticism they receive from people, even their parents, as long as they adhere to the standards set by Allah, the Exalted, in respect to fulfilling the rights of their parents. A muslim does not need to always obey their parents, even in lawful matters, if it means sacrificing their own happiness in order to please their parents, as long as they continue to show manners and respect. Always sacrificing one’s happiness for the sake of other people often leads to bitterness and sadness. A child must hope for reward from Allah, the Exalted, and not their parents or other people for whatever they do. This will ensure they gain reward in both worlds, as Allah, the Exalted, only rewards people that do things for His sake. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. The one who acts for the sake of their parents will find that as people are generally ungrateful, they do not receive the praise and acknowledgement they deserve and hope for. This in turn will make them bitter, especially if they have sacrificed their happiness for the happiness of their parents. Bitterness prevents one from fulfilling the rights of people, which in turn leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

“…*Say, "Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents and relatives…"*”

Allah, the Exalted, always gives all-encompassing advice within the Holy Quran. In this case, Allah, the Exalted, often urges the kind treatment of one’s relatives within the Holy Quran, as acting on this single advice alone would ensure prosperity, peace and justice in society. If each person treated

their relatives kindly, no other aid from an outside source would ever be required. This would ensure each member of every family unit is treated with kindness, which in turn would have a positive effect on the entire society.

One must aid their relatives in anything which is praiseworthy in Islam and warn them against anything which is blameworthy. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 2:

"…And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression…"

Sadly, many muslims today ignore this advice and instead aid others according to their relationship with them, irrespective of if the thing they are aiding them in is good or bad. A muslim must adhere to the sequence advised in the following verse and only aid their relatives in things which are directly connected to the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, 83:

"…*Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good and to relatives…"*

One must aid their relatives according to their means, which includes emotional, physical and financial support. This is best achieved when one

treats others how they desire other people to treat them. One must not pay much notice to the standard and definition of a good relative defined by people, as their standard and definition often contradicts the definition and standard set by Islam. Instead, one must fulfill the rights of their relatives according to the teachings of Islam for the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, irrespective of whether they are considered a good relative by their relatives or not. Finally, a muslim must never sever ties with their relatives for worldly reasons, as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5984, that the one who severs ties with their relatives for worldly reasons will not enter Paradise. In addition, even though a muslim can cut off ties with their relative over religious reasons, none the less, it is best to maintain ties with their relative by aiding them in things which are good and warning them in things which are bad, as this may encourage their relative to sincerely repent from their misguidance.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"…*Say, "Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents and relatives and orphans and the needy and the traveler…""*

Orphans are often mentioned in Islamic teachings as they are often deprived of their rights because of their social weakness. Therefore, a muslim must ensure they aid those who are considered socially weak in society, such as orphans and widows, according to their means. Sponsoring orphans and widows has become extremely easy in this day and age as one can set this up online within a few minutes. And the sponsorship amount is often less

than their monthly phone bill. Therefore, muslims must not ignore this vital part of Islam as it leads to the continuous support of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the one who takes care of an orphan will obtain his closeness in Paradise. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6005. Finally, the one who takes care of the needy, such as a widow, will be granted the same reward as the one who prays all night and fasts every day. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6006. Therefore, the one who finds it difficult to perform voluntary good deeds, such as the voluntary night prayer and voluntary fasts, should act on this Hadith in order to achieve this reward with minimal effort.

It is important to note that one should always remember that whatever means they possess, such as wealth, has been granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, as a loan and not as a gift. A loan must be repaid to its owner. The way one repays the loan granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, is by using them in ways pleasing to Him. Therefore, the one who aids the needy is only repaying the debt they owe Allah, the Exalted. When one remembers this it will prevent them from behaving as if they are doing a favor to Allah, the Exalted, or the needy person. In reality, Allah, the Exalted, favored them by granting them worldly blessings and by granting them an opportunity to gain countless reward by aiding the needy. In addition, the needy person has done the donor a favor by accepting their help. If every needy person rejected the aid of others then how will one obtain the reward mentioned in divine teachings? Remembering these points will prevent one from destroying their reward by adopting the incorrect attitude.

Finally, aiding the needy includes fulfilling any lawful need a person may have. This includes emotional, physical and financial needs. Therefore, no muslim, irrespective of how little wealth they possess, can excuse themself from acting on this verse.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"…*Say, "Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents and relatives and orphans and the needy and the traveler…""*

The traveler is the stranger who is stuck in a foreign land. Allah, the Exalted, encourages Muslims to give them some of their wealth in order to help them on their journey if they need it. The one who possesses wealth should show compassion towards this stranger and help them in whatever way they can even if that is by giving them food or a means of transportation or protecting them from any wrongdoing that may occur to them during their journey.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"…*Say, "Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents and relatives and orphans and the needy and the traveler…""*

As discussed earlier, one must act for the sake of pleasing Allah, the Exalted, and not pleasing people in order to obtain reward in both worlds. A good intention is needed in order to avoid bitterness when people fail to show gratitude to them. Bitterness always prevents one from fulfilling the rights of people which in turn leads to the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, a muslim must ensure they have a good intention, which is to please Allah, the Exalted, and seek reward only from Him, even if other people fail to acknowledge the good they do. This has been indicated at the end of the main verse under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"…And whatever you do of good - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it."

This also removes any excuse a person can give to avoid doing good as it has not been limited in any way. As discussed earlier, doing good involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, and therefore can be done by anyone irrespective of how little worldly things they possess, as every person possesses something, even if it is just their own body. One must therefore avoid a lazy attitude whereby they avoid using what they have been granted correctly while claiming they do not possess worldly things, such as wealth, to do good with.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

“…And whatever you do of good - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.”

This verse also indicates that Allah, the Exalted, knows and will reward a person in both worlds with peace of mind and success for whatever good they do. It is therefore left to a person to choose whether they desire more peace of mind or less in both worlds and act accordingly. Each person will receive according to the efforts they put into using the blessings they have been granted correctly. It is strange how people desire peace of mind yet fail to fulfil their end of the agreement. It is strange how people understand that in worldly matters a person receives according to their efforts yet they expect Allah, the Exalted, to grant them peace of mind in both worlds while putting in the minimal or no effort into pleasing Him. Therefore, if a person puts in the minimal effort then they should not expect much back from Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2376, that the one who hoards the worldly blessings they have been granted will find that Allah, the Exalted, withholds His blessings from them. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

“O you who have believed, if you support Allāh, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 216-218

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰٓ أَن تَكْرَهُوا۟ شَيْـًٔا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰٓ أَن
تُحِبُّوا۟ شَيْـًٔا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١٦﴾

يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلشَّهْرِ ٱلْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌۢ بِهِۦ
وَٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِۦ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ ٱلْقَتْلِ وَلَا
يَزَالُونَ يُقَٰتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ ٱسْتَطَٰعُوا۟ وَمَن يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ عَن
دِينِهِۦ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَٰلُهُمْ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ
أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا۟ وَجَٰهَدُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ ٱللَّهِ
وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢١٨﴾

“Battle has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.

They ask you about the sacred month - about fighting therein. Say, "Fighting therein is great [sin], but averting [people] from the way of Allah and disbelief in Him and [preventing access to] al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and the expulsion of its people therefrom are greater [evil] in the sight of Allah. And fitnah is greater than killing." And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able. And whoever of you reverts from his religion [to disbelief] and dies while he is a disbeliever - for those, their deeds have become worthless in this

world and the Hereafter, and those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.

Indeed, those who have believed and those who have emigrated and strive in the cause of Allah - those expect the mercy of Allah. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“*Battle has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you…”*

In order to correctly understand the meanings of the verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, one must place them in their correct context. Meaning, no verse or Hadith can be taken in isolation without observing the context in which it was revealed or recorded in order to justify someone’s actions. In order to correctly understand the context of the verses and Hadiths one must analyze them in the light of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only in this way will it become clear what or who a specific verse or Hadith refers to.

In addition, Muslims can only take up arms against external aggressors under the banner of a legitimate ruler and when it is done according to the injunctions found within the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who fight must constantly fear Allah, the Exalted, in crossing these limits and rules. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

“*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors.”*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 194:

"…*So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you. And fear Allah…"*

One such rule is to resort to war only when one is attacked, as indicated by the main verses under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

"*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you…"*

Therefore, showing physical aggression against an enemy in a state of peace is forbidden. Another rule is that when the enemy desists from aggression then Muslims must desist also. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 193:

"…But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression [i.e., assault] except against the violators."

If the enemy desires peace it must be granted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 90:

"…So if they remove themselves from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allāh has not made for you a cause [for fighting] against them."

The third rule is that civilians are not to be harmed. This has been indicated by the main verses under discussion as this is transgressing. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, repeatedly forbade women, children, elders, and the sick, as well as monks and hermits to be harmed during war. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2614, and Musnad Ahmad, number 2728.

The first Caliph of Islam Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased him, forbade the killing of children, women and the elderly, in line with the teachings of Islam. He forbade the cutting of fruit bearing trees, damaging property and the killing of cattle. This has been advised in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, number 33121.

The second Caliph of Islam Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, made it clear to the Muslim armies not to harm non-soldiers such as a farmer. This has been advised in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, number 33120.

In case of impending conflict the Muslim nation are commanded to prepare as best as they can. This preparation aims to deter the enemy from attacking, in which case if the enemy wish for peace it must be granted to them. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verses 60-61:

"And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allāh and your enemy…And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also]…"

Permission is granted to fight those who do not honor their treaties with the Muslims. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 12-13:

"And if they break their oaths after their treaty and defame your religion, then combat the leaders of disbelief, for indeed, there are no oaths [sacred] to them; [fight them that] they might cease. Would you not fight against a people who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time?"

Islam has forbade attacking those who respect their treaties. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 7:

"…So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him]."

There is no question of forcing anyone to accept Islam as it is something which must be accepted by one's heart not only through one's tongue and actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion…"

Those who are at peace with the Muslims are to be treated with justice at all times. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verses 8-9:

"Allāh does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allāh only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion…"

War is hateful to Allah, the Exalted, and Muslims must be forced into it while not desiring it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“Battle has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you…”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even warned Muslims not to desire fighting and instead commanded them to desire safety from Allah, the Exalted. But if they were forced to encounter the enemy then they must remain steadfast. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2966.

The real intent of the Holy Quran is to stress that force should be used only when its use is unavoidable, only to the extent that is absolutely necessary and under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

As mentioned earlier, it is vital to assess a verse or a Hadith in its right context in order to understand who, what and where it applies. Unfortunately, many people, intentionally or unintentionally, fail to interpret the verses and Hadiths on fighting in this way. One very famous example is of a verse which is referred to as the sword verse even though the word “sword” is not mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 5:

“And when the inviolable months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush…”

As explained earlier in detail even this statement of war is restricted to specific conditions and concessions of peace. In addition, studying the historical context of this and other related verses clearly prove that it is not a universal principle for fighting non-Muslims. Meaning, the verse refers to a specific group of people, at a specific time and in a specific place.

The surrounding verses of the sword verse clearly indicate on multiple occasions that the polytheists referred to are only those who repeatedly violated their peace treaties with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and engaged in acts of violent aggression against the Muslim community and its allies. For example, the verse immediately before the Sword verse, meaning, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 4, states:

“Excepted are those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists and then they have not been deficient toward you in anything or supported anyone against you; so complete for them their treaty until their term [has ended]. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

This is followed by another command in a related verse, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 7:

“How can there be for the polytheists a treaty in the sight of Allāh and with His Messenger, except for those with whom you made a treaty at al-Masjid al-Ḥarām? So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

The crimes of these polytheists whom fighting was commanded against are mentioned in other related verses. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 8-10:

“How [can there be a treaty] while, if they gain dominance over you, they do not observe concerning you any pact of kinship or covenant of protection? They satisfy you with their mouths, but their hearts refuse [compliance], and most of them are defiantly disobedient. They have exchanged the signs of Allāh for a small price and averted [people] from His way. Indeed, it was evil that they were doing. They do not observe toward a believer any pact of kinship or covenant of protection. And it is they who are the transgressors.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 12-13:

“And if they break their oaths after their treaty and defame your religion, then combat the leaders of disbelief, for indeed, there are no oaths [sacred] to them; [fight them that] they might cease. Would you not fight against a people who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time?...”

Theses specific polytheists continuously broke their agreements and aided others against Islam. They began hostilities against the Muslims, prevented people from accepting Islam, expelled Muslims from Mecca and Masjid Al Haram. At least eight times in the quoted verses their crimes against the Muslims are mentioned.

In chapter 9 Tawbah, verse 12, which was quoted earlier, the goal of fighting the “leaders of disbelief” is so they “cease” from their acts of aggression. These verses, like the rest, indicate the importance of adhering to specific conditions during times of war such as fighting only those who fight them first.

In addition, these polytheists were still offered many warnings and concessions. They were given a four-month period of respite and peace. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 2:

“So travel freely, [O disbelievers], throughout the land [during] four months but know that you cannot cause failure to Allah…”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 5:

“And when the inviolable [four] months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush…”

This respite was given so that they either accept Islam or peacefully leave the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to grant protection to any of these polytheists who requested it so that they have the opportunity to listen to the teachings of Islam without any fear or pressure or they could peacefully leave the Arabian Peninsula without fear of being harmed. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 6:

“And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allāh [i.e., the Qur’ān]. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know.”

The command in the sword verse of fighting and killing these polytheists would only come into effect if they remained in the Arabian Peninsula after the four-month respite without accepting Islam. It is important to note that many of the polytheists took advantage of this respite and accepted Islam. Because of this respite fighting came to an end and no blood was actually shed on account of the sword verse, as the aim of this verse was to act as a deterrent from further bloodshed meaning, either these polytheists accept Islam or leave the Arabian Peninsula peacefully.

To conclude, the surrounding verses and the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, place the sword verse in its correct context. Meaning, these verses were specifically revealed in order to put an end to attacks from specific hostile polytheists against the Muslim community. Therefore, they cannot be blankly applied to others after them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"*Battle has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you…"*

This struggle also includes struggling against the Devil, one's inner devil and the widespread evil that occurs within society, which are fueled by social media, fashion and culture, such as alcohol and gambling which are mentioned in the next few verses. The struggle against these things involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, instead of using them according to one's desires or the desires of others. This struggle is arguably harder than fighting in the path of Allah, the Exalted, as this is a constant battle which only ends when one dies. Even though this struggle to use the blessings one has been granted correctly often contradicts one's desires it is best to accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…*But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”*

A person must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will obtain good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on the advice of Islam. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But just like an unwise patient who chooses to reject the medical advice of their doctor will obtain poor mental and physical health, so will the person who rejects the advice of Islam. This is because one cannot escape the power and control of Allah, the Exalted, over their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. This is why wealthy people end up with poor mental health despite possessing many worldly things, such as wealth. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, as indicated at the end of verse 216, Islamic teachings have been designed to suit the nature of human beings. Irrespective of how much knowledge people obtain in respect to the mental and physical state of humans, their knowledge will always be limited therefore, they cannot provide people with a complete code of conduct to live by which leads to peace of mind and body. And as people are extremely short sighted they can never fully appreciate the future consequences of choosing a particular code

of conduct to live by. The only One who can provide the best code of conduct is Allah, the Exalted, as He knows all things. The same way a person accepts the advice of their medical doctor as they possess knowledge, a person must trust and accept the advice of Allah, the Exalted, as He knows all things and cannot make any mistakes. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

It is important to note, that even though Islamic teachings was revealed over 1400 years ago it will still apply till the end of time as it addresses the nature of humans, something which is timeless and unchanging in itself.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"Battle has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you. But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.

This also includes the choices and decrees of Allah, the Exalted. A person must firmly believe that whatever Allah, the Exalted, has chosen for them is best for them, even if the wisdoms behind His choice is not apparent to them.

There are many examples within a person’s life where they believed something was good when it was bad for them and other things they thought were bad when they were actually good for them. Remembering these past events within one’s life strengthens their faith in trusting the choices and commands of Allah, the Exalted, and facing every situation with gratitude and patience. Gratitude involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Patience involves avoiding complaining with one’s speech or actions and maintaining one’s obedience to Allah, the Exalted, knowing He chooses what is best for people, even if this is not obvious to them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…*And Allah knows, while you know not.”*

This emphatic statement reminds people to remain humble and accept their lack of knowledge and their extreme short sightedness in respect to all things. The one who forgets this reality will easily behave as they know what is best and it can even encourage them to demand specific worldly things from Allah, the Exalted, as if they are certain it is best for them, as if they know better than Allah, the Exalted, what is good for them. It is easy for this type of person to behave in a rude manner towards Allah, the Exalted, whereby one treats Him and His treasury as a shop while they are the customer who is always right and knows what is best. Whereas, the one who understands their lack of knowledge and foresight will show respect towards Allah, the Exalted, and not demand specific worldly things from Him and instead ask for general good things as indicated by Islamic teachings and

trust that whatever Allah, the Exalted, chooses for them is best, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 200-201:

“…And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share. But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire."”

Even before the coming of Islam four months out of the year had particular value amongst Arabs and they would avoid fighting within them. The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, unintentionally fought against the non-muslims of Mecca within one of these sacred months as they believed that the sacred month had not started yet. But Allah, the Exalted, absolved them of this error and made it clear that the unjust practices, oppression and violence of the non-muslims of Mecca, such as preventing the muslims from entering Mecca, when they had no right to stop them, was far worse than fighting during the four sacred months. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 217:

“They ask you about the sacred month - about fighting therein. Say, "Fighting therein is great [sin], but averting [people] from the way of Allāh and disbelief in Him and [preventing access to] al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and the expulsion of its people therefrom are greater [evil] in the sight of Allāh. And fitnah [corruption] is greater than killing."…”

But even then the non-muslims of Arabia would not even adhere to this general rule and would often move around the months within the annual calendar so that they could justify fighting within them. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 36-37:

“Indeed, the number of months with Allāh is twelve [lunar] months in the register of Allāh [from] the day He created the heavens and the earth; of these, four are sacred. That is the correct religion [i.e., way], so do not wrong yourselves during them. And fight against the disbelievers collectively as they fight against you collectively. And know that Allāh is with the righteous [who fear Him]. Indeed, the postponing [of restriction within sacred months] is an increase in disbelief by which those who have disbelieved are led [further] astray…”

The non-muslims of Mecca used this incident as a propaganda against the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by claiming his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, broke their general rule by fighting within the sacred months. The non-Muslims of Mecca had continuously subjected their Muslim relatives to untold wrong for thirteen years, prior to the migration of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to Medina, merely because they believed in Allah, the Exalted. They therefore were not competent to object to fighting during the sacred months. Not only had the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, been driven from their homes, they also had the way to Masjid Al Haram in Mecca closed to them, a bar which had not been imposed by anyone for thousands of years. With this record of corruption it was not for them or anyone else to raise an objection to fighting during the sacred months if the need arose.

Generally speaking, muslims must avoid this attitude of making themselves feel better by being very strict in avoiding unliked practices within Islam or things which are open to debate even though they persist in clear prohibitions which are easier to avoid. For example, some debate and argue over where one should place their hands during their prayer, even though this is a secondary issue within Islam and is not connected to the obligatory duties. Yet at the same time this person will persist on backbiting others, which is a major sin in Islam. Their strictness in small things within Islam makes them feel they are good muslims even though they persist on sins which they should not be committing. Just like the non-muslims of Mecca persisted on major corruption and wrongdoing yet complained about the muslims who fought within the sacred months.

The corruption mentioned in verse 217 refers to the wide negative effects of the oppression caused by the enemies of Islam meaning, the non-Muslims of Mecca. The heart of this corruption was their misguided faith and loyalties to their tribes, love for wealth, culture and false gods. The specific corruption mentioned in the main verse further proves that fighting was commanded against a specific group of non-Muslims in Mecca and therefore, these verses cannot be applied to others blankly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 217:

“…Say, "Fighting therein is great [sin], but averting [people] from the way of Allāh and disbelief in Him and [preventing access to] al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and the expulsion of its people therefrom are greater [evil] in the sight of Allāh. And fitnah is greater than killing."…”

Therefore, the corruption in these verses refers to the persecution of innocent people. It refers to a situation whereby either a person or a group is subjected to harassment and intimidation for having accepted, as true, a set of ideas contrary to those currently held, and for striving to effect reforms in the existing order of society by preaching what is good and forbidding what is wrong. Therefore, the only way to prevent this specific harming of innocent people by this corruption was to fight the enemy until Islam was allowed to be practiced openly without opposition and the negative harms to society caused by the non-Muslims was stopped.

In addition, the widespread oppression caused by oppressive rulers, such as the Romans and Persians, during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was widely known. They would constantly oppress the people of the land they had control over. Fighting these people might have led to the killing of soldiers, soldiers which signed up to fight and die, but in the long run it removed the oppression the innocent citizens were subjected to. And if Islamic rule was established correctly, like it was during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the rightly-guided Caliphs after him, then justice would prevail in the land. Therefore, from this one can understand that long-standing oppression to the people is worse than the killing of soldiers if it leads to justice being established.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 217:

“…*And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able…”*

Generally speaking, the enemies of Islam, the Devil and misguided people who desire others to follow them in behaving like animals whereby they live according to their desires instead of living by a higher moral code, will always attempt to misguide muslims so that they abandon their values and way of life. One of these weapons is to convince muslims to continue claiming faith in Islam while abandoning practicing on it. Sadly, this has become a widespread issue even though the very word muslim means the person who has practically submitted to Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, there is no such thing as a muslim who does not practice Islam. In fact, the one who behaves in this manner is at risk of losing their faith entirely. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 217:

“…And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able. And whoever of you reverts from his religion [to disbelief] and dies while he is a disbeliever - for those, their deeds have become worthless in this world and the Hereafter, and those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.”

This is because faith is like a plant which must be nourished with acts of obedience in order to remain alive and strong. Just like a plant will die when it fails to obtain nourishment, such as sunlight, so may well the faith of a person die if they fail to nourish it with acts of obedience. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy

Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is the only way one can obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who abandons faith or fails to act on their verbal declaration of faith will find that they misuse the blessings they have been granted. And as warned in the main verses under discussion, all their efforts, energy and resources will go to waste, even if this is not obvious to them. Meaning, their efforts will not lead to peace of mind and success in both worlds even if they possess many worldly things, such wealth and fame, and even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. This is because they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted, specifically over their spiritual hearts, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 217:

“…And they will continue to fight you until they turn you back from your religion if they are able. And whoever of you reverts from his religion [to disbelief] and dies while he is a disbeliever - for those, their deeds have become worthless in this world and the Hereafter, and those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide therein eternally.”

Therefore, a person must accept and act on the teachings of Islam for their own sake. As mentioned earlier, they must behave like a wise patient who

accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 218:

"*Indeed, those who have believed and those who have emigrated and strive in the cause of Allah - those expect the mercy of Allah…"*

A muslim must therefore, for their own sake, actualize their faith by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is the greater version of striving for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and emigrating for His sake, as it is a continuous process. But as indicated by the end of verse 218, Allah, the Exalted, does not demand perfection from anyone. He only expects them to strive hard in obeying Him and to sincerely repent if they happen to commit sins. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. The one who behaves in this manner will find the forgiveness and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds, which in turn will increase their peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 218:

"…And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 218:

“*Indeed, those who have believed and those who have emigrated and strive in the cause of Allah - those expect the mercy of Allah…”*

The striving in this verse means doing one's utmost to achieve something. It is not the equivalent of war, for which the Arabic word is Qital. Striving has a wider meaning and embraces every kind of striving in the cause of Allah, the Exalted. The one who strives in the cause of Allah, the Exalted, is the person who is sincerely devoted to their cause, who uses their mental capacity to reflect how best they can achieve this aim. They propagate Islam by word and by the pen. They use their physical energy in striving to serve Allah, the Exalted. They spend all the resources at their disposal to promote Islam and they employ all the force they command in confronting any power which might stand in its way and whenever necessary they do not flee from risking their lives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. All this is striving in the cause of Allah, the Exalted. They struggle in this way exclusively to please Allah, the Exalted, to establish the supremacy of His religion and to make His word prevail.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 218:

"*Indeed, those who have believed and those who have emigrated and strive in the cause of Allah - those expect the mercy of Allah…"*

This verse also eliminates the concept of wishful thinking. This is when one fails to obey Allah, the Exalted, whereby they misuse the blessings they have been granted and still expect the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This is wishful thinking and has no value in Islam. Whereas, the one who adopts real hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is the one strives to sincerely obey Him, by using the blessings they have been granted correctly and sincerely repents whenever they happen to commit a sin. The difference between the two has been indicated in this manner in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

In addition, this verse also indicates that Allah, the Exalted, knows and will reward a person in both worlds with peace of mind and success for whatever good they do. It is therefore left to a person to choose whether they desire more peace of mind or less in both worlds and act accordingly. Each person will receive according to the efforts they put into using the blessings they have been granted correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. It is strange how people desire peace of mind yet fail to fulfil their end of the agreement. It is strange how people understand that in worldly matters a person receives according to their efforts yet they expect Allah, the Exalted, to grant them peace of mind in both worlds while putting in the minimal or no effort into pleasing Him. Therefore, if a person puts in the minimal effort then they should not expect much back from Allah, the Exalted. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 2376, that the one who hoards the worldly blessings they have been

granted will find that Allah, the Exalted, withholds His blessings from them. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 7:

"O you who have believed, if you support Allāh, He will support you and plant firmly your feet."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 218:

"*Indeed, those who have believed and those who have emigrated and strive in the cause of Allah - those expect the mercy of Allah…"*

A muslim must also remember the greater sacrifices made and the greater difficulties faced by those who came before them, those who were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, than themself, such as the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. This reminder will aid them in remaining patient during their times of difficulty, just like the people before them were patient. Patience involves avoiding complaining with one's words or actions and maintaining their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, knowing He decides what is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them. In fact, this reminder should inspire them to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, for not being subjected to the tests and difficulties the righteous predecessors were subjected to. Gratitude is shown when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy

Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This patience and gratitude will aid one in facing every difficulty and situation correctly so that they achieve an uncountable reward and peace of mind in both worlds.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 219-220

۞ يَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْخَمْرِ وَٱلْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَآ إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَـٰفِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَآ
أَكْبَرُ مِن نَّفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ قُلِ ٱلْعَفْوَ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْـَٔايَـٰتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١٩﴾

“They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit." And they ask you what they should spend. Say, "The excess [beyond needs]." Thus Allah makes clear to you the verses [of revelation] that you might give thought.

To this world and the Hereafter. And they ask you about orphans. Say, "Improvement for them is best. And if you mix your affairs with theirs - they are your brothers. And Allah knows the corrupter from the amender. And if Allah had willed, He could have put you in difficulty. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.””

The beginning of the main verse indicates the importance of researching and studying relevant topics of Islamic and worldly knowledge. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"*They ask you…"*

In respect to religious knowledge, the topics one must research and study are the topics connected to the things Allah, the Exalted, will question people about on Judgement Day, such as how to treat one's neighbour. The topics which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day are not relevant and only waste a person's time. The only one who is in a position to dedicate their energy to irrelevant topics are those who have already act on the relevant topics. As this is virtually impossible to do completely, people must concentrate all their efforts, time and energy to researching and acting on those branches of religious knowledge which will be questioned about on Judgement Day and leave everything else. And examples of relevant topics are then mentioned in the main verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 219:

"*They ask you about intoxicants and gambling…"*

These two things were not initially prohibited in Islam as they had become deeply entrenched within the Arab society. Just like a wise doctor gradually increases the dose of medicine given to their patient in order to make the treatment manageable by the patient, Allah, the Exalted, did the same in

respect to some commands and prohibitions, such as alcohol and gambling. He employed this technique in order to make the transition from a non-Muslim to a strong Muslim easier for a person. If all the final commands and prohibitions were put into full affect in one go, this process becomes difficult. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 219:

“They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit."…”

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 43:

“O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying…”

And finally chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 90:

“O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful.”

But Allah, the Exalted, did indicate from the very beginning an important principle of Islam which should be taken into consideration even if a particular thing was not prohibited at that time. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 219:

"*They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit."…"*

The principle of Islam is that when the harm of a thing outweighs its perceived benefits then it should be discarded even if it has not been specifically labelled unlawful within Islam. A person should live by this code as it will protect them from harm in both worlds. In addition, Islam is a straight forward and honest religion and therefore does not deny that there is some perceived benefits in unlawful things, such as enjoyment. But a wise person will ignore these perceived minor and short lived benefits if the overall harm is greater to them and others, such as their family.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 219:

"*They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit."…"*

In this modern-age the negative effects of alcohol on the human mind and body is well documented, even if it is drunk in small quantities. In addition, the negative effects on society caused by alcohol is also well known, as it leads to many other crimes, such as assaults, as a drunk loses control over their tongue and actions. It negatively affects all three aspects of a person: their body, mind and soul. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 3376, that the one who regularly drinks alcohol without sincerely repenting will not enter Paradise. The fact that alcohol and gambling has been placed next to something which is connected to polytheism in the Holy Quran is enough to indicate its seriousness in the eyes of Islam. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verse 90:

"O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful."

Gambling destroys every aspect of a person's life, including their work, health, financial and family life. It is associated with countless other sins and mental health issues, such as alcoholism, depression and suicidal tendencies. As indicated by verse 219, a person may win some money through gambling but in the long run they will only ever be a loser. This is obvious, even in respect to successful gamblers as their greed for wealth only ever increases, which in turn prevents them from obtaining peace of mind with whatever they have earned through gambling. In addition, as gambling is unlawful, the wealth they gain will only become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, a person, for their own sake, must avoid both alcohol and gambling and any other thing where the harm of it outweighs its perceived benefits.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates an important reality to understand. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 219:

"*They ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say, "In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit." And they ask you what they should spend. Say, "The excess [beyond needs]."…"*

A society only ever becomes engrossed in things which causes it more harm than benefit, when the members of that society obtain more wealth then they need to cover their basic needs and responsibilities. The person who earns enough to cover their basic needs and responsibilities is less likely to get involved in negative things within the society, such as clubs and casinos, whether this involves opening these businesses or visiting them as a customer. This is why Allah, the Exalted, advised muslims to spend their excess wealth on things pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and some of those were mentioned in an earlier verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

"They ask you what they should spend. Say, "Whatever you spend of good is [to be] for parents and relatives and orphans and the needy and the traveler. And whatever you do of good - indeed, Allāh is Knowing of it.""

Therefore, a muslim should firstly aim to earn according to their basic needs and responsibilities in order to avoid the temptation of misusing their wealth and other resources, such as their time and energy. If they do earn more wealth, which most muslims do, then they must concentrate on using it and the other resources they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if they ignore this important advice and instead misuse the blessings they have been granted on vain and sinful things, then it will only prevent them from obtaining peace of mind, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. This is quite evident when one observes those who misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as the rich and famous, as they are often the most drowned in mental health issues despite the fact they have access to worldly luxuries. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Allah, the Exalted, then urges mankind to reflect on the teachings of Islam, such as the ones discussed in this verse so far, so that they can recognize the truth, accept it and then act on it so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 219-220:

"…Thus Allah makes clear to you the verses that you might give thought. To this world and the Hereafter…"

Unlike other religions and cults which encourage people to avoid reflecting on its teachings and principles and instead blindly accept and follow what their religious leaders advise them, Islam invites people to use their common sense and judge the truthfulness of Islam based on its teachings, advice and evidence. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….""

And chapter 34 Saba, verse 46:

“Say, "I only advise you of one [thing] - that you stand for Allāh, [seeking truth] in pairs and individually, and then give thought.”…”

Sadly, many muslims have adopted the wrong attitude whereby they blindly follow a religious scholar without trying to understand the teachings of Islam. A major problem with adopting this attitude is that this muslim will never obtain strong faith as they do not possess the Islamic knowledge to achieve it. As a result, every time they face difficulties their weak faith will be overcome and they will fail to show patience during them. And every time they face times of ease, they will fail to show gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, because of their weak faith. Patience involves avoiding complaining with one’s speech and actions and continuing to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, knowing He chooses what is best for them in every situation. Gratitude involves sincerely using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Real patience and gratitude can only be shown and maintained by those who possess strong faith, which is rooted in Islamic knowledge, whereas blindly imitating others in Islam only leads to weak faith.

Another major issue of blindly imitating religious scholars without understanding Islamic teachings is that one becomes unable to answer the questions of the next generation who are rightfully encouraged by society to use their common sense and question things. Failing to answer their questions will only encourage them to abandon the teachings of Islam even if they claim to believe in it verbally. It is important to note that a parent taking their child to a religious scholar to answer their questions about Islam often does not result in the desired outcome, as children do not trust strangers and may well feel like they are being tricked into believing and following something that will contradict their happiness. This is similar to when a person is tricked into following a cult by a stranger. Children only feel comfortable to accept the answers to their questions about Islam from those they trust, such as their parents. But if their parents do not have the answers, as they are ignorant of Islamic teachings themselves, then this will only weaken the child's attachment to Islam. This can therefore only be avoided when the parents and elders of family follow the commands and advice of the Holy Quran to learn and reflect over its teachings so that they strengthen their own faith and are therefore in a position to teach the next generation why Islam is the truth and how it leads to peace of mind in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 219-220:

"…Thus Allah makes clear to you the verses that you might give thought. To this world and the Hereafter…"

Reflecting on life and the teachings of Islam will allow one to recognize their purpose in this world, which eventually leads to the hereafter. Without this recognition a person will lead an empty life, even if they obtain worldly success. This reality is quite obvious as most people who obtain worldly success often experience an emptiness within their life. This emptiness can only be filled when one fulfils the purpose of life in this world. Chapter 51 Adh Dhariyat, verse 56:

“And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship [obey] Me.”

This purpose involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Therefore, failing to fulfil one’s purpose will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind. This again is quite evident when one observes those who have obtained worldly success and how they still fail to obtain peace of mind. Just like any invention will be classified a failure when it fails to fulfil its primary function of creation, even if it possesses many positive secondary features, a human who fails to fulfil their only purpose of creation will not obtain their goal of achieving peace of mind in both worlds also. Therefore, one must reflect on the purpose of life, the choices made by the people around them and the consequences of these choices, history and the teachings of Islam so that they recognize their purpose and strive to fulfil it so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds.

Allah, the Exalted, often indicates the importance of fulfilling the rights of people within the Holy Quran as this is a vital part of Islam which is often overlooked by people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 220:

"…*And they ask you about orphans. Say, "Improvement for them is best…""*

Sadly, muslims are often good at striving to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, yet neglect the rights of people, even though both are required to obtain success. For example, one must avoid wronging others as justice will be established on Judgement Day. If a victim does not forgive their oppressor, then the oppressor will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victim and if necessary, the oppressor will take the sins of their victim until justice is established. This may well cause the oppressor to be hurled into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 220:

"…*And they ask you about orphans. Say, "Improvement for them is best. And if you mix your affairs with theirs - they are your brothers. And Allah knows the corrupter from the amender. And if Allah had willed, He could have put you in difficulty…""*

As discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3699, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who were always taking care of orphans, were afraid of using the wealth of the orphan to take care of them. They were afraid that they might unintentionally mix the wealth of the orphan with their own wealth. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 10:

"Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming into their bellies fire. And they will be burned in a Blaze [i.e., Hellfire]."

Because of this they placed themselves in hardship by attempting to separate the affairs of the orphan from their own affairs, such as cooking food separately. This was difficult as the majority of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were poor and did not possess the means to live in this way. Allah, the Exalted, made it clear that as long as one uses the wealth of the orphan in their upbringing correctly any unintentional mixing of wealth would be overlooked and pardoned. As Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of a person's intention He would judge them on this. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1.

This indicates the importance of correcting one's intention in every situation. One should aim to please Allah, the Exalted, in everything to do, which in turn will encourage them to speak and act in the correct way. This in turn will ensure they strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and the rights of people. Whereas, the one who adopts the incorrect intention will fail to speak

and behave in the correct way and as a result they will fail to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, or people. In addition, because of their bad intention, they will not gain any reward for the few good things they do, as Allah, the Exalted, only rewards people when they act to please Him. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

In addition, Allah, the Exalted, called the orphans the brothers of the general population thereby indicating that a person must treat other people just like they desire people to treat their own family. If everyone treated others in this way, justice, respect and peace would spread within society and the rights of all people would be fulfilled.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 220:

"…*And they ask you about orphans. Say, "Improvement for them is best. And if you mix your affairs with theirs - they are your brothers. And Allah knows the corrupter from the amender. And if Allah had willed, He could have put you in difficulty…""*

Generally speaking, orphans are often mentioned in Islamic teachings as they are often deprived of their rights because of their social weakness. Therefore, a muslim must ensure they aid those who are considered socially weak in society, such as orphans and widows, according to their means. Sponsoring orphans and widows has become extremely easy in this day and

age as one can set this up online within a few minutes. And the sponsorship amount is often less than their monthly phone bill. Therefore, muslims must not ignore this vital part of Islam as it leads to the continuous support of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised that the one who takes care of an orphan will obtain his closeness in Paradise. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6005. Finally, the one who takes care of the needy, such as a widow, will be granted the same reward as the one who prays all night and fasts every day. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6006. Therefore, the one who finds it difficult to perform voluntary good deeds, such as the voluntary night prayer and voluntary fasts, should act on this Hadith in order to achieve this reward with minimal effort.

It is important to note that one should always remember that whatever means they possess, such as wealth, has been granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, as a loan and not as a gift. A loan must be repaid to its owner. The way one repays the loan granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, is by using them in ways pleasing to Him. Therefore, the one who aids the needy is only repaying the debt they owe Allah, the Exalted. When one remembers this it will prevent them from behaving as if they are doing a favor to Allah, the Exalted, or the needy person. In reality, Allah, the Exalted, favored them by granting them worldly blessings and by granting them an opportunity to gain countless reward by aiding the needy. In addition, the needy person has done the donor a favor by accepting their help. If every needy person rejected the aid of others then how will one obtain the reward mentioned in divine teachings? Remembering these points will prevent one from destroying their reward by adopting the incorrect attitude.

Finally, aiding the needy includes fulfilling any lawful need a person may have. This includes emotional, physical and financial needs. Therefore, no muslim, irrespective of how little wealth they possess, can excuse themself from helping the needy.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 220:

"…*And if Allah had willed, He could have put you in difficulty…"*

Generally speaking, this reminds people that Allah, the Exalted, has designed the Islamic code of conduct in order to benefit people so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. This outcome cannot be achieved by any man-made code of conduct because of a lack of knowledge, especially in respect to the mental and physical state of humans, and as people are extremely short sighted they cannot fully understand the consequences of their choices. In addition, all man-made codes of conduct will always be biased and benefit one group of people over another. As Allah, the Exalted, is unbiased, Wise and All Knowing, He is the only One who can create a code of conduct which leads to peace of mind and justice within society. As long as people follow the Islamic code of conduct, they will obtain this outcome, even if Allah, the Exalted, needs to move the Heavens and Earth for them, as He is All Mighty. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 220:

"…Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise."

History is proof that when the Islamic code of conduct was implemented within society correctly, that society achieved peace, justice and stability. Therefore, a person must accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will obtain good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on the Islamic code of conduct. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, just like the foolish patient who fails to accept and act on the advice of their doctor will obtain poor mental and physical health, so will the person who fails to accept and act on the Islamic code of conduct, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment as they cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted. This is quite evident when one observes those who misuse the blessings they have been granted. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whether one observes the spiritual truth that Allah, the Exalted, alone has control over their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind, and therefore He alone decides who obtains peace of mind. And it is obvious that He will not grant peace of mind to those who disobey Him by misusing the blessings they have been granted. Or if one observes this truth from a scientific point of view, by understanding that failing to follow the perfect Islamic code of conduct which is specifically designed for the nature of humans, and leads

to a balanced mental and physical state, will only prevent one from obtaining peace of mind. The reality of obtaining peace of mind in both worlds is established whichever way one observes it.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 221

وَلَا تَنكِحُوا۟ ٱلْمُشْرِكَٰتِ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنَّ وَلَأَمَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّن مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ وَلَا
تُنكِحُوا۟ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا۟ وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّن مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَدْعُونَ
إِلَى ٱلنَّارِ وَٱللَّهُ يَدْعُوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱلْجَنَّةِ وَٱلْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِۦ وَيُبَيِّنُ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ



“And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry [your women] to polytheistic men until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you. Those invite [you] to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and to forgiveness, by His permission. And He makes clear His verses [i.e., ordinances] to the people that perhaps they may take heed.”

In order for a society to achieve stability, justice and peace, its foundation unit, the family home, needs to achieve these things first. And as stable family homes begin with marriage, Allah, the Exalted, often addresses different aspects of marriage, such as divorce, within the Holy Quran. In the following verses different aspects of marriage will be discussed and this first verse begins with the concept of finding a suitable spouse, which is the first step to achieving a stable and peaceful family home. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 221:

“And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you…”

Generally speaking, this verse encourages muslims to choose the correct spouse as this, arguably, has the biggest effect on the family unit. The correct spouse will encourage the people around them, such as their spouse and children, to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This in turn will ensure the household achieves peace of mind, even if they face times of difficulties. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who does not believe in Allah, the Exalted, nor act on their faith will only ever encourage and influence the people around them, whether directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, such as their spouse and children, to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This in turn will deprive the household of peace of mind, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they cannot escape the power of Allah, the Exalted, over their spiritual hearts, the abode of peace of mind. This is quite evident when one observes the families who misuse the blessings they have been granted, even if they have access to worldly luxuries. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

"And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep."

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

This outcome is inevitable as Allah, the Exalted, alone possesses the knowledge and foresight to provide a code of conduct for people to live by in order obtain a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind. But if people follow man-made codes of conduct, then they will never obtain a balanced mental and physical state, as these codes of conduct lack knowledge and foresight which prevents them from achieving the desired goal.

In respect to marriage, achieving peace of mind within the marriage and household therefore begins with choosing the correct spouse, the one who uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, and encourages others to do the same. This is further supported by the Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090. He advised that people choose a spouse based on four reasons: wealth, lineage, beauty or for the sake of their piety. He then concluded that a muslim should prioritize choosing a spouse who possesses piety otherwise they will be a loser. Piety involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Even though the other three reasons: wealth, lineage and beauty, can be considered in a marriage but they should not be the main reason for marriage. This has been indicated in the main verse also. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 221:

“And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry [your women] to polytheistic men until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you...”

For those who lack Islamic knowledge, piety may not be a desired quality to search for in a spouse yet it is the only quality that will ensure their spouse fulfils their rights and the rights of other people, such as their children. For example, the one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will not harm their spouse verbally and especially physically. Whereas, the one who does not possess piety will easily transgress against others, even against their spouse and children. Marrying people who do not possess piety is one of the main reasons why domestic violence cases has increased within muslim marriages. In addition, choosing the wrong spouse will only cause the stress of a person to increase as the wrong spouse is unlikely to make a good parent to their children. Incorrectly raising children will only increase the stress, trouble and difficulties within the household. The one who possesses an unsuitable spouse and incorrectly raised children is therefore less likely to find peace of mind within their home.

Furthermore, the other things mentioned in the Hadith quoted earlier: wealth, beauty and lineage, may please someone but as they are outward forms of beautification, they will not encourage a person to obey Allah, the Exalted, an aspect of which is to fulfil the rights of one’s family. The difference between the two is similar to adopting a healthy diet over an unhealthy one.

Unhealthy foods are always more attractive and pleasing to a person but they only ever lead to mental and physical health problems. Whereas, healthy foods may not be so attractive or pleasing to people yet they lead to good mental and physical health, which is a vital part of achieving peace of mind.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 221:

“And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry [your women] to polytheistic men until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you...”

This verse indicates the importance of avoiding judging the status of people based on worldly standards. Islam judges people based on a single criterion: how much they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…”

All other standards of judging the status of people have no value, such as gender, ethnicity and social class, and must be ignored by muslims otherwise it gives rise to racism and disunity amongst the muslim nation. It is important to note that as one's intention is hidden from other people, they cannot judge others to be better than other people based on outward actions and must therefore refrain from making claims about the status of other people or themselves, as Allah, the Exalted, alone knows the intention, speech and actions of all people. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 32:

"…So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 221:

"And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry [your women] to polytheistic men until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you..."

The wording of this verse suggests that the family of a woman seeking a husband should be actively involved in this pursuit. This is because the negative consequences of a woman marrying the wrong husband is more

severe for her than a man marrying the wrong woman. In most cases, verbal and physical abuse of a spouse and children is caused by the husband. The male relatives of the woman, in some cases, will be able to detect certain things from a potential husband which even the woman cannot detect, as men recognize other men better than women do, just like women recognize other women better than men do. Therefore, a woman choosing the wrong husband is more dangerous than a man choosing the wrong wife. In order to minimize the chances of a woman marrying the wrong husband, her family must be actively involved in aiding her to find a suitable spouse who will obey Allah, the Exalted, and encourage others to do the same, an aspect of which is to fulfil the rights of one's spouse and children.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates another important reality which is often overlooked by people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 221:

"*And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry polytheistic men [to your women] until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you. Those invite [you] to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and to forgiveness, by His permission…"*

Someone who does not believe in Allah, the Exalted, or does not support their verbal declaration of faith with actions, will inevitably lead a life whereby they disobey Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted. As a result, they will directly or indirectly encourage the people around them to do the same, as a person will inevitably adopt the

characteristics and behaviour of their companions. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4833, that a person adopts their companion's way of life. For example, when someone who does not smoke accompanies people who do, then smoking becomes normalized in their eyes, which is the first step for them to start smoking too. In addition, as the way of life of non-muslims is very different from the muslim's code of conduct, what is acceptable to a non-muslim to do, such as drinking alcohol, will also become normalized to a muslim who accompanies them. This does not mean a muslim should not be on friendly terms with non-muslims, as this is an aspect of Islam. But it means they must not become so intimidate with them so that they adopt their characteristics and behaviour, especially those ones which contradict Islamic teachings.

One must therefore carefully choose their companions, and especially their spouse, as they will be indirectly or directly invited by them, through their behaviour and advice, towards the fire of troubles and stress in this world and the fire of Hell in the hereafter or peace of mind in this world and the gardens of Paradise in the hereafter. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 221:

"*And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry polytheistic men [to your women] until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you. Those invite [you] to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and to forgiveness, by His permission…"*

In addition, marriage is a relationship which has deep social, moral and emotional implications. The marriage between a Muslim and a polytheist has many possible outcomes. On the one hand, it is possible that because of the influence of the Muslim spouse, the other partner, the family and the future generations may become receptive to Islamic beliefs and to the Islamic way of life. On the other hand, it is also possible that the spouse who is a polytheist may influence the thinking and mode of living of the believing spouse, the family and the future generations. Moreover this relationship may promote in that family a fusing and mixing of religions. Even if this is acceptable to a non-Muslim it is in no way acceptable to Islam. No true Muslim can run the risk that either the ideas and life-styles which are organically related to atheism and polytheism may flourish among the members of their family or that some aspect of their own faith may become contaminated with incorrect beliefs and practices influenced by their polytheist spouse. If one observes Muslims today they will find that many of them have been influenced by their non-Muslim friends and neighbours into adopting non-Muslim practices and beliefs. If this occurs with friends and neighbours can one imagine the effect of a polytheist spouse?

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 221:

"*And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a polytheist, even though she might please you. And do not marry polytheistic men [to your women] until they believe. And a believing slave is better than a polytheist, even though he might please you. Those invite [you] to the Fire, but Allah invites to Paradise and to forgiveness, by His permission…"*

To conclude, this small verse encompasses a major step towards achieving peace of mind within the family home, which in turn leads to peace and justice spreading within the society. But this outcome will only be obtained when people pay attention and act on this advice, even if they fail to observe the wisdoms behind them. As Allah, the Exalted, alone has knowledge of all things and knows the consequences of all actions and choices, He alone can guide people to what is best for them so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds, even if one's desires are contradicted. A person must therefore behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will obtain a healthy mental and physical state, so will the person who accepts and acts on the advice of Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 221:

"…And He makes clear His verses [i.e., ordinances] to the people that perhaps they may take heed."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 222-223

وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْمَحِيضِ ۖ قُلْ هُوَ أَذًى فَٱعْتَزِلُوا۟ ٱلنِّسَآءَ فِى ٱلْمَحِيضِ ۖ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ
يَطْهُرْنَ ۖ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ ٱللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحِبُّ ٱلتَّوَّٰبِينَ وَيُحِبُّ
ٱلْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾

نِسَآؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأْتُوا۟ حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ ۖ وَقَدِّمُوا۟ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّكُم
مُّلَٰقُوهُ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾

“And they ask you about menstruation. Say, "It is pain, so keep away from wives during menstruation. And do not approach them until they are cleansed. And when they have cleansed themselves, then come to them from where Allah has ordained for you. Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves.

Your wives are a place of cultivation [i.e., sowing of seed] for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish and put forth [righteousness] for yourselves. And fear Allah and know that you will meet Him. And give good tidings to the believers.”

The beginning of the main verse indicate the importance of researching and studying relevant topics of Islamic and worldly knowledge. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 215:

“*They ask you…”*

In respect to religious knowledge, the topics one must research and study are the topics connected to the things Allah, the Exalted, will question people about on Judgement Day, such as how to treat one’s neighbour. The topics which will not be questioned about on Judgement Day are not relevant and only waste a person’s time. The only one who is in a position to dedicate their energy to irrelevant topics are those who have already act on the relevant topics. As this is virtually impossible to do completely, people must concentrate all their efforts, time and energy to researching and acting on those branches of religious knowledge which will be questioned about on Judgement Day and leave everything else. And an example of a relevant topic is then mentioned in the main verses. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 222:

“*And they ask you about menstruation. Say, "It is pain, so keep away from wives during menstruation. And do not approach them until they are cleansed. And when they have cleansed themselves, then come to them from where Allah has ordained for you…”*

It is important to note even though people in the modern world are discussing the importance of being sensitive to women when they go through their monthly cycle, Allah, the Exalted, indicated this over 1400 years ago. Allah, the Exalted, only informed people that the monthly cycle a woman experiences is painful so that they show extra care, respect and patience towards them during this time. Even though the literal meaning of the quoted verse means that a husband is not allowed to perform the specific act of intimacy with his wife during her monthly cycle, as this will cause harm to both of them, the other meaning of this is that one should give women extra space instead of mentally suffocating them by becoming unnecessarily demanding of them during this difficult time. This in fact, extends to beyond husbands. Meaning, all men should improve their good behaviour towards women. Even employers should be extra considerate towards their female employees and try their best in being flexible with them in respect to working hours and working from home in order to make things easier for them.

It is strange how many in this age criticize Islam in respect to women's rights yet overlook these and other teachings, which were given centuries before the concepts they are formulating today.

In addition, even if science has not yet proven the specific harms caused by having intimacy with one's spouse during her monthly period, it does not mean the harm is not there. It is only a matter of time before science reveals some of these harms, just like it has revealed some of the harms of the other things prohibited by Islam, such as alcohol and eating pork.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 222:

“*And they ask you about menstruation. Say, "It is pain, so keep away from wives during menstruation. And do not approach them until they are cleansed. And when they have cleansed themselves, then come to them from where Allah has ordained for you…”*

In the age before Islam women who were going through their monthly cycle were seen as impure and untouchable. Even the men from the people of the book would not eat or mingle with their wives during their monthly cycle inside their homes. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 289.

Allah, the Exalted, removed this foolish mentality as He did not even state that this monthly cycle somehow makes them impure in the way they believed. Allah, the Exalted, went further by informing people that as this cycle is a painful one people should therefore improve their care and respect for them, just like one improves their behaviour towards someone who has injured themselves or is sick. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, always demonstrated this love and care towards his wives, may Allah be pleased with them. For example, he would lay his head in the lap of his wife, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, and recite the Holy Quran during her monthly cycle. This has been recorded in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 297. He would drink out of the same cup as his wife, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, during her monthly cycle and would purposely place his lips on the same part of the cup she would place hers when drinking. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 280.

Coming to one’s wife in a way ordained by Allah, the Exalted, teaches Muslims to only be physically intimidate with their spouse in ways allowed by Islam.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 222:

“…*And when they have cleansed themselves, then come to them from where Allah has ordained for you. Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves…”*

Allah, the Exalted, combined physical purity with spiritual purity in this verse thereby highlighting the importance of both within the life of a muslim. Physical purity is important for the health of the body and spiritual purity is important for the health of the spiritual heart. Purity of the spiritual heart involves adopting the positive characteristics discussed within Islamic teachings, such as generosity, patience and gratitude, and abandoning the negative characteristics discussed within Islamic teachings, such as envy, enmity and pride. The one who strives to purify their spiritual heart will then use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings, which will lead to the purity of one’s intention, speech and actions. When both physical and spiritual purity combine within a person, it leads to peace of mind and body. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to purify their spiritual heart will adopt negative characteristics, which will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This will lead to stress, trouble and difficulties in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they will not achieve the mental and physical balance required to achieve peace of mind and as they cannot escape the control Allah, the Exalted, has over their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, failing to purify the spiritual heart will prevent one from obtaining a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn, will prevent them obtaining peace of mind. As Allah, the Exalted, alone knows all things, such as the mental and physical states of human beings, He alone can provide the correct method of purifying the spiritual heart which then leads to peace of mind. All other man-made methods will never lead to this outcome as they do not possess the knowledge and foresight to achieve this goal.

As Allah, the Exalted, does not expect perfection from people, He encourages them to sincerely repent whenever they commit sins. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 222:

"…Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves."

Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Therefore, one must not fool themself into believing Allah, the Exalted, demands perfection from them. Instead, He expects people to strive hard to purify their bodies and spiritual hearts according to the teachings of Islam, something all people have the ability to do, as He does not impose duties on people they cannot fulfil, and when they happen to commit sins to sincerely repent. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 223:

"*Your wives are a place of cultivation [i.e., sowing of seed] for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish…"*

This verse indicates the importance of showing kindness, respect and love towards one's wife during both private intimate moments as well as in public. A farmer who cultivates their land shows great care and attention towards it similarly, a husband must do the same in respect to his wife: the mother of

his children. Sadly, many muslims are good at treating strangers with kindness and respect but often overlook treating their own relatives with respect and kindness. A muslim must understand that a person's relatives have more of a right to be treated with love, respect and kindness than anyone else, even though all people deserve this treatment. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2612, that the one who possesses complete faith is the one who is best in conduct and most kind to their family. In order to treat one's spouse correctly, a person must treat them just like they would desire the spouse of their loved one to treat their beloved. For example, a man should treat his wife in a way he desires his son-in-law to treat his daughter. In fact, adopting this attitude in all of one's relationships is a sign of true belief. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13.

This verse also indirectly indicates the importance of marrying a person who will fulfil the rights of their spouse, which includes treating them with care, respect and love. This is only achieved when one chooses a spouse who possesses piety. The one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will strive to fulfil the rights of people, as they know it is a duty on them which will be questioned about on Judgement Day. Whereas, the one who does not possess the fear of Allah, the Exalted, will easily wrong other people, such as their spouse and children, as they do not fear the consequences of their behaviour. This is why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, that people must get married to someone who possesses piety otherwise they will be a loser.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 223:

“*Your wives are a place of cultivation [i.e., sowing of seed] for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish and put forth [righteousness] for yourselves…”*

This refers to having children and raising them according to teachings of Islam. The one who achieves this will make their child a source of peace for them in this world and in the next. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 74:

“And those who say, "Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes…””

But this is only achieved when one fulfils the rights of their child. This involves providing them the tools to succeed in both religious and worldly matters, according to their means. Sadly, muslim parents are good at providing their children worldly education but very often neglect their religious education, even though the latter is more important and far reaching. Teaching one’s child to recite the Holy Quran in a language they do not understand and to offer the five daily obligatory prayers is not enough to fulfil the rights of their child. A parent must strive to teach them what the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, discuss, so that the child learns to obey Allah, the Exalted, throughout every situation not just for a few minutes during the obligatory prayers, while being convinced it is the truth instead of following Islam because of their parents. This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Failing to do

this will only cause one's child to adopt weak faith in Islam, which in turn will prevent them from obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every situation. The child who behaves in this manner will misuse the blessings they have been granted and will therefore become a source of stress for their parents in both worlds, even if the child achieves worldly success. Only when a parent fulfils this important duty will they be exempt from blame, even if they child chooses to ignore Islamic teachings.

As fulfilling the rights of one's spouse and raising their child are duties on every person, they must fear the consequences of failing these duties so that they are encouraged to strive hard to fulfil them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 223:

"…And fear Allāh and know that you will meet Him…"

As indicated by the end of verse 223, those who truly believe they will face their final accountability on the Day of Judgement will practically prepare for it. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, such as their spouse and children. This attitude will then lead to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 223:

“…And give good tidings to the believers.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who fails to practically prepare for their accountability on the Day of Judgement proves they do not believe in it the way they must in order to achieve success. As a result, they will misuse the blessings they have been granted which prevents them from fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, such as their spouse and children. This will lead to stress, trouble and difficulties in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment, as they will not achieve the mental and physical balance required to achieve peace of mind and as they cannot escape the control Allah, the Exalted, has over their spiritual heart, the abode of peace of mind. This is quite obvious when one observes those who misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as the rich and famous. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 223:

"…And fear Allāh and know that you will meet Him…"

The command to remember that one will face their accountability in the hereafter indicates the importance of adopting strong faith. Certainty of faith is achieved when one learns and acts on the clear proofs and evidences found within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who adopts strong faith will strive hard to practically prepare for their accountability in the hereafter. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Whereas, the one who possesses weak faith, the root of which is ignorance of Islamic

knowledge, will easily misuse the blessings they have been granted and as a result they will fail to practically prepare for the Day of Judgement.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 224-225

وَلَا تَجۡعَلُواْ ٱللَّهَ عُرۡضَةٗ لِّأَيۡمَٰنِكُمۡ أَن تَبَرُّواْ وَتَتَّقُواْ وَتُصۡلِحُواْ بَيۡنَ ٱلنَّاسِۚ وَٱللَّهُ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٞ ٢٢٤

لَّا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ بِٱللَّغۡوِ فِيٓ أَيۡمَٰنِكُمۡ وَلَٰكِن يُؤَاخِذُكُم بِمَا كَسَبَتۡ قُلُوبُكُمۡۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٞ ٢٢٥

“And do not make [your oath by] Allah an excuse against being righteous and fearing Allah and making peace among people. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.

Allah does not impose blame upon you for what is unintentional in your oaths, but He imposes blame upon you for what your hearts have earned. And Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing.”

Within the teachings of Islam, Allah, the Exalted, explains the importance of controlling one's speech in different ways. Generally speaking, there are three types of speech. The first is sinful speech and must be avoided at all times, as the main reason for attracting trouble and stress to oneself in this world is through words, especially sinful words. In addition, evil words spoken will be the main reason people enter Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. The second type of speech is vain speech. Even though this is not considered a sin, none the less it should be avoided as vain speech often leads to sinful speech. For example, vain speech often leads to backbiting and gossiping about others. In addition, it is a waste of time and energy which often leads to stress and arguments in this world and it will be a great regret for a person on Judgement Day, especially when they observe those who used their time and energy in the correct way and the reward they receive as a consequence. The third type of speech is good and beneficial speech and should be spoken in both worldly and religious matters. Therefore, one must try to remove two-thirds of speech from their life. This is a reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2501, that whoever is silent is saved.

Allah, the Exalted, teaches the importance of controlling one's speech with a specific example in the main verses. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 224:

"*And do not make [your oath by] Allah an excuse against being righteous and fearing Allah and making peace among people…"*

The main cause of people misusing their words in these situations is anger. Islam teaches people to control their anger so that they do not commit sins by disobeying Allah, the Exalted, with their speech or actions. For example, an angry person should remain silent and only talk after their anger has left them. A person should leave the situation they are involved in when they angry and return only when they have calmed down. Words can often be more damaging then actions therefore, it is vital to control one's speech, especially when they are angry. In order to control their actions, an angry person must take an inactive body position. Meaning, if they are standing they should sit down and if they are sitting down, then they should lie down until they calm down. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4782. A person should counter the negative effects of anger by adopting praiseworthy characteristics, such as patience, forbearance and forgiveness, which are discussed within Islamic teachings and abandon the negative characteristics discussed within Islamic teachings, such as obscene speech.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 224:

"*And do not make [your oath by] Allah an excuse against being righteous…"*

Being righteous includes doing all types of good towards others, such as emotional, financial and physical support. Promising not to aid others in this way often occurs when one is angry against someone else, such as their relative. An example is mentioned within the Holy Quran. Abu Bakkar, may Allah be pleased with him, promised not to continue aiding his relative who took part in spreading the slander against his daughter and the wife of the

Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her. As a result, Allah, the Exalted, revealed the following verse encouraging him to not fulfil his promise and to instead forgive for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and continue aiding his relative, as his relative sincerely repented from his mistake. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

"And let not those of virtue among you and wealth swear not to give [aid] to their relatives and the needy and the emigrants for the cause of Allāh, and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allāh should forgive you? And Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful."

This event has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3180.

In addition, one must avoid making promises to avoid helping others in good things and ignore the bad behaviour of people and instead seek their reward from Allah, the Exalted, while protecting themself from any serious harm caused by other people, such as physical or verbal harm.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 224:

“*And do not make [your oath by] Allah an excuse against being righteous and fearing Allah…”*

A person’s speech should not prevent them from fearing Allah, the Exalted. This is achieved when one controls their speech so that it aids them to perform actions which are rooted in piety. Piety involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. The one who controls their speech out of the fear of Allah, the Exalted, is more likely to control their actions, as the former is harder to do, in most cases. This is why a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2407, warns that when one’s speech is correct and upright, their actions will also be correct and upright.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 224:

“*And do not make [your oath by] Allah an excuse against being righteous and fearing Allah and making peace among people…”*

The reconciliation between people mentioned in this verse warns against holding grudges against other people. This often occurs when one makes a promise not to speak to other people because of some problem between the two. This contradicts the teachings of Islam as a person must not severe ties over worldly reasons. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi,

number 1909, that a person who severs their ties with their relatives over worldly reasons will not enter Paradise. Instead, a person must strive to fulfil the rights of all people according to the teachings of Islam, which includes helping them in good things and warning them against bad things. They should also take the necessary steps to protect themself from receiving serious harm from others and seek their reward from Allah, the Exalted, alone. Even though it is acceptable to sever ties with others over religious reasons, none the less, one should avoid this attitude and instead continue aiding others in good things, as this kind treatment may be the reason for them to sincerely repent from their sins.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 224:

"*And do not make [your oath by] Allah an excuse against being righteous and fearing Allah and making peace among people…"*

The negative things mentioned in this verse often occur when one fails to correct their intention when dealing with others. The one who does good things towards others for the sake of people will often find that as people are not grateful, it leads to bitterness which leads to problems between them. In addition, because of their bad intention they will not receive any reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Whereas, the one who adopts the correct intention, which is to please Allah, the Exalted, will only seek reward from Him and will therefore avoid the things mentioned in verse 224 and instead continue aiding others, irrespective of their general bad behaviour. But it is important to note, if the bad behaviour of others is serious, such as verbal and physical

abuse, then one should make changes within their life in order to protect themself from harm without making promises they will not do good things.

As indicated by the end of verse 224, as Allah, the Exalted, is All Hearing, He hears the words of all people, therefore they must control their speech so that they only speak good words. As Allah, the Exalted, is All Knowing, they must correct their intention so that they avoid the negative things mentioned in verse 224 and instead continue doing good to others, for their own sake, as it leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 224:

“…And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 224:

"*And do not make [your oath by] Allah an excuse against being righteous and fearing Allah and making peace among people…"*

A muslim must avoid using the name of Allah, the Exalted, in this way as it belittles it. A muslim must increase their respect and fear of Allah, the Exalted, by learning His divine names and attributes, as a person cannot fear and respect someone they do not know. The one who does this will also adopt praiseworthy characteristics and abandon negative characteristics as they will be encouraged to act on the divine names and attributes of Allah, the Exalted, according to their own created level. For example, the one who learns about the infinite mercy of Allah, the Exalted, will learn to behave mercifully with others in order to obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted. This is why learning and acting on the divine names leads to Paradise. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2736.

In cases where a person does not intend to make a promise but utters words that show this, such as Arabic speaking people who have a habit of casually swearing by the name of Allah, the Exalted, in their speech, Allah, the Exalted, will overlook and pardon this. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 225:

"*Allah does not impose blame upon you for what is unintentional in your oaths, but He imposes blame upon you for what your hearts have earned…"*

But as discussed earlier, the main verses encourage one to control their speech so that they always speak in an upright manner, which would protect them from unintentional speech.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 225:

"*…but He imposes blame upon you for what your hearts have earned…"*

This a warning to correct one's intention at all times so that they speak and act only to please Allah, the Exalted. It is vital to understand that the inward foundation of Islam is one's intention. If one's foundation is corrupt then everything they do will be corrupt. The one who adopts the wrong intention, such as aiming to please people, will therefore gain no reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. Therefore, one must always adopt the intention to please Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure their speech and actions are correct which in turn leads to reward and blessings for them in both worlds. A positive sign of a good intention is that one does not expect nor hope for gratitude or appreciation from other people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 225:

“*…but He imposes blame upon you for what your hearts have earned…”*

This also indicates the importance of purifying one’s spiritual heart. The purification of the spiritual heart leads to good intentions, speech and actions, which ensures one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This in turn leads to a balanced mental and physical state, which ultimately leads to peace of mind in both worlds. The purification of the spiritual heart is achieved when one learns and adopts the positive characteristics discussed within Islamic teachings, such as patience, gratitude and generosity, and abandons the negative characteristics discussed within Islamic teachings, such as envy, pride and greed.

As Allah, the Exalted, is All Forgiving, a person must sincerely repent from the speech and actions they have performed with the wrong intention and resolve to correct their intentions in the future. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 225:

“…*And Allah is Forgiving…”*

In addition, As Allah, the Exalted, is Forbearing, a person must not be fooled into believing they will not be held accountable for their wrong intention and bad speech and actions just because they have not been punished immediately or in an obvious way. The punishment of Allah, the Exalted, is

often very subtle. For example, the worldly things, such as wealth and fame, one has been granted often becomes a source of stress for them. Just because a person is not punished immediately does not mean they will not be punished at all. Delayed punishment is not the same as no punishment. As Allah, the Exalted, is Forbearing, He gives people respite to change for the better and therefore one must use this time of respite by ensuring they correct their intention, speech and actions at all times. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 225:

"…And Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing."

In addition, these two divine names also encourage muslims to behave forgivingly to others whenever they mistreat them, hoping Allah, the Exalted, will forgive them in return. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

"…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?..."

And people must adopt forbearance in the face of bad behaviour and learn to let things go, as people are not Angels and can therefore make mistakes. Just like a person desires Allah, the Exalted, and other people to be forbearing and forgiving with them, they should behave in this manner with other people. But as discussed earlier, this does not mean one should not take steps to protect themself from the physical and verbal abuse of others.

They should take these steps so that history does not repeat itself and then learn to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. But in minor situations, forbearance and forgiveness should be adopted.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 226-233

لِّلَّذِينَ يُؤۡلُونَ مِن نِّسَآئِهِمۡ تَرَبُّصُ أَرۡبَعَةِ أَشۡهُرٖۖ فَإِن فَآءُو فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٞ ﴿٢٢٦﴾

وَإِنۡ عَزَمُواْ ٱلطَّلَٰقَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٞ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

وَٱلۡمُطَلَّقَٰتُ يَتَرَبَّصۡنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَٰثَةَ قُرُوٓءٖۚ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَن يَكۡتُمۡنَ مَا خَلَقَ ٱللَّهُ فِيٓ أَرۡحَامِهِنَّ إِن كُنَّ يُؤۡمِنَّ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۚ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ إِنۡ أَرَادُوٓاْ إِصۡلَٰحٗاۚ وَلَهُنَّ مِثۡلُ ٱلَّذِي عَلَيۡهِنَّ بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِۚ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيۡهِنَّ دَرَجَةٞۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٨﴾

ٱلطَّلَٰقُ مَرَّتَانِۖ فَإِمۡسَاكُۢ بِمَعۡرُوفٍ أَوۡ تَسۡرِيحُۢ بِإِحۡسَٰنٖۗ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمۡ أَن تَأۡخُذُواْ مِمَّآ ءَاتَيۡتُمُوهُنَّ شَيۡـًٔا إِلَّآ أَن يَخَافَآ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِۖ فَإِنۡ خِفۡتُمۡ أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيۡهِمَا فِيمَا ٱفۡتَدَتۡ بِهِۦۗ تِلۡكَ حُدُودُ ٱللَّهِ فَلَا تَعۡتَدُوهَاۚ وَمَن يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِ فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ﴿٢٢٩﴾

فَإِن طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُۥ مِنۢ بَعۡدُ حَتَّىٰ تَنكِحَ زَوۡجًا غَيۡرَهُۥۗ فَإِن طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيۡهِمَآ أَن يَتَرَاجَعَآ إِن ظَنَّآ أَن يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ ٱللَّهِۗ وَتِلۡكَ حُدُودُ ٱللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوۡمٖ يَعۡلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٠﴾

وَإِذَا طَلَّقۡتُمُ ٱلنِّسَآءَ فَبَلَغۡنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمۡسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعۡرُوفٍ أَوۡ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعۡرُوفٖۚ وَلَا تُمۡسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارٗا لِّتَعۡتَدُواْۚ وَمَن يَفۡعَلۡ ذَٰلِكَ فَقَدۡ ظَلَمَ نَفۡسَهُۥۚ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوٓاْ ءَايَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ هُزُوٗاۚ وَٱذۡكُرُواْ نِعۡمَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَمَآ أَنزَلَ عَلَيۡكُم مِّنَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبِ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةِ يَعِظُكُم بِهِۦۚ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيۡءٍ عَلِيمٞ ٢٣١

وَإِذَا طَلَّقۡتُمُ ٱلنِّسَآءَ فَبَلَغۡنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعۡضُلُوهُنَّ أَن يَنكِحۡنَ أَزۡوَٰجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَٰضَوۡاْ بَيۡنَهُم بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِۗ ذَٰلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِۦ مَن كَانَ مِنكُمۡ يُؤۡمِنُ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۗ ذَٰلِكُمۡ أَزۡكَىٰ لَكُمۡ وَأَطۡهَرُۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعۡلَمُ وَأَنتُمۡ لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ ٢٣٢

۞ وَٱلۡوَٰلِدَٰتُ يُرۡضِعۡنَ أَوۡلَٰدَهُنَّ حَوۡلَيۡنِ كَامِلَيۡنِۖ لِمَنۡ أَرَادَ أَن يُتِمَّ ٱلرَّضَاعَةَۚ وَعَلَى ٱلۡمَوۡلُودِ لَهُۥ رِزۡقُهُنَّ وَكِسۡوَتُهُنَّ بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِۚ لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفۡسٌ إِلَّا وُسۡعَهَاۚ لَا تُضَآرَّ وَٰلِدَةُۢ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوۡلُودٞ لَّهُۥ بِوَلَدِهِۦۚ وَعَلَى ٱلۡوَارِثِ مِثۡلُ ذَٰلِكَۗ فَإِنۡ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَن تَرَاضٖ مِّنۡهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٖ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيۡهِمَاۗ وَإِنۡ أَرَدتُّمۡ أَن تَسۡتَرۡضِعُوٓاْ أَوۡلَٰدَكُمۡ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ إِذَا سَلَّمۡتُم مَّآ ءَاتَيۡتُم بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِۗ وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ بَصِيرٞ ٢٣٣

“For those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives is a waiting time of four months, but if they return [to normal relations] - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

And if they decide on divorce - then indeed, Allah is Hearing and Knowing.

Divorced women remain in waiting [do not remarry] for three periods, and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allah has created in their wombs if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take them back in this [period] if they want reconciliation. And due to them [i.e., the wives] is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men [i.e., husbands] have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.

Divorce is twice. Then [after that], either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with excellent treatment. And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them unless both fear that they will not be able to keep [within] the limits of Allah. But if you fear that they will not keep [within] the limits of Allah, then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself. These are the limits of Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah - it is those who are the wrongdoers.

And if he has divorced her [for the third time], then she is not lawful to him afterward until [after] she marries a husband other than him. And if he [i.e., the latter husband] divorces her [or dies], there is no blame upon them [i.e., the woman and her former husband] for returning to each other if they think that they can keep [within] the limits of Allah. These are the limits of Allah, which He makes clear to a people who know [understand].

And when you divorce women and they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms or release them according to acceptable terms, and do not keep them, intending harm, to transgress [against them]. And whoever does that has certainly wronged himself. And do not take the verses of Allah in jest. And remember the favor of Allah upon you and what has been revealed to you of the Book and wisdom by which He instructs you. And fear Allah and know that Allah is Knowing of all things.

And when you divorce women and they have fulfilled their term, do not prevent them from (re)marrying their husbands if they agree among themselves on an acceptable basis. That is instructed to whoever of you

believes in Allah and the Last Day. That is better for you and purer, and Allah knows and you know not.

Mothers may nurse [breastfeed] their children two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the nursing [period]. Upon the father is their [i.e., the mothers'] provision and their clothing according to what is acceptable. No person is charged with more than his capacity. No mother should be harmed through her child, and no father through his child. And upon the [father's] heir is [a duty] like that [of the father]. And if they both desire weaning through mutual consent from both of them and consultation, there is no blame upon either of them. And if you wish to have your children nursed by a substitute, there is no blame upon you as long as you give payment according to what is acceptable. And fear Allah and know that Allah is Seeing of what you do."

The previous verses discussed the importance of controlling one's speech and avoiding making disliked oaths. A specific example is then given at the beginning of the main verses under discussion which was widely practiced in Arab society. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 226:

"*For those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives is a waiting time of four months…"*

This again indicates the importance of controlling one's speech in order to protect themself and others from trouble in both worlds. Generally speaking, there are three types of speech. The first is sinful speech and must be avoided at all times, as the main reason for attracting trouble and stress to oneself in this world is through words, especially sinful words. In addition, evil words spoken will be the main reason people enter Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2616. The second type of speech is vain speech. Even though this is not considered a sin, none the less it should be avoided as vain speech often leads to sinful speech. For example, vain speech often leads to backbiting and gossiping about others. In addition, it is a waste of time and energy which often leads to stress and arguments in this world and it will be a great regret for a person on Judgement Day, especially when they observe those who used their time and energy in the correct way and the reward they receive as a consequence. The third type of speech is good and beneficial speech and should be spoken in both worldly and religious matters. Therefore, one must try to remove two-thirds of speech from their life. This is a reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2501, that whoever is silent is saved.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 226:

"*For those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives is a waiting time of four months…"*

In the time before Islam, an angry husband would take this oath but not put a time restriction on it. This has been discussed in Imam Al Wahidi's, Asbab Al Nuzul, 2:226. This was a clear injustice towards his wife as she was not divorced so that she could remarry nor was she living in a real marriage with her husband. Allah, the Exalted, put an end to this foolish and unjust practice by putting a limit on this separation.

The four months waiting period before the divorce is finalized has been set in order to allow the emotions of both the husband and wife to calm down so that they can assess the positive and negative aspects of remaining married or getting divorced with a clear, unbiased and overly emotional mind so that they can make an informed decision which they will not later regret. However, this informed decision is not achieved when divorce occurs immediately and people often do not desire to change their mind out of self-respect and shame, which only aids further stress to a person's regret. In addition, this time allows for a pregnancy to manifest itself and must not be concealed by the wife, as the husband has a right to know before he decides on divorcing her or not. Finally, a waiting period prevents the couple who choose to divorce from rushing emotionally into another marriage, which will only lead to further problems for them.

If a husband breaks his vow while realizing he made a mistake and instead desires to stay with his wife, then he will find that Allah, the Exalted, does not punish him for his hastiness. Instead, Allah, the Exalted, will show forgiveness and mercy towards them both, but the husband does need to compensate for their broken oath, as prescribed by Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 226:

"For those who swear not to have sexual relations with their wives is a waiting time of four months, but if they return [to normal relations] - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful."

The divine attributes of forgiveness and mercy remind married couples to show mercy and forgiveness to each other, as adopting these two characteristics will prevent them from overreacting in situations which often lead to arguments, especially over problems which can be easily resolved without resulting to a divorce. Though it is important to mention that in serious situations, such as physical abuse, a person must take the steps to protect themself and others, such as their children, even if it means divorcing their spouse, as Islam has never encouraged people to endure this type of abuse. Only after protecting oneself, so that history does not repeat itself, should a person strive to forgive others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and then move on with their life.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates the importance of involving outside help in dealing with marriage troubles which cannot be resolved by the couple. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 227:

“And if they decide on divorce…”

The plural word, which indicates more than two people, instead of the dual Arabic word is used. A married couple must first strive to correct the issues between them. They must put aside their biases and emotions and try hard to deal with problems objectively and logically under the guidance of Islam. While dealing with the problems, the couple must continue to show respect to each other, as this has been commanded by Allah, the Exalted, even if their spouse fails to do this. They must treat each other how they desire for their beloved to be treated by their spouse. In addition, they must strive to minimize the chances of problems by learning the rights they owe their spouse and the rights they are owed by their spouse. A major cause of marriage problems and divorce is when a person demands things from their spouse which they are not entitled to. All of these things can only be achieved when one chooses a spouse based on the teachings of Islam, which is to marry a person who possesses piety. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090. The one who fears Allah, the Exalted, will not mistreat their spouse, even when they are angry with them and they will strive to fulfil their rights, knowing Allah, the Exalted, will hold them accountable. Whereas, the one who does not fear Allah, the Exalted, will easy mistreat their spouse and they will not fulfil the rights of their spouse, even if they claim to love them.

If the married couple fail to solve the problems themselves, then they should turn to outside help, such as relatives and marriage counselling. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 35:

“And if you fear dissension between the two, send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allāh will cause it between them. Indeed, Allāh is ever Knowing and Aware.”

But as indicated by this verse, the people that are called upon to help, must possess experience, Islamic knowledge, wisdom and the fear of Allah, the Exalted. Only when they possess these characteristics will they behave in an honest and sincere way which aids the married couple. Sadly, many muslims fail to ask help from the correct people and as a result they only make things worse. The person who does not possess these characteristics will only care about proving their side is right and the other side is wrong. Nor will they possess the knowledge of the rights spouses owe each other and as a result all the things they argue about will be in favor of their side, instead of being honest and fair.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 227:

“And if they decide on divorce…”

The Arabic word for decide in this verse means a strong determination. Therefore, when one side is fully determined to divorce, then this should not be opposed by the other side, as it only leads to further problems and enmity between the two sides and prolongs stress. In this case, it is best to move on swiftly with the divorce proceedings and then move on with life.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 227:

"And if they decide on divorce - then indeed, Allāh is Hearing and Knowing."

Whether a couple decide to stay together or get divorced, they and the other people involved, such as their relatives, must maintain good manners towards each other, as commanded by Islam. As Allah, the Exalted, hears and knows their intention, speech and actions, He will therefore hold them accountable in both worlds. In addition, if a couple decide to divorce, then Allah, the Exalted, will aid them in obtaining a peaceful life, as He is fully aware of their situation, as long as they maintain their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This ensures they achieve a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 130:

“But if they separate [by divorce], Allāh will enrich each [of them] from His abundance. And ever is Allāh Encompassing and Wise.”

When a divorce is issued, the woman must wait for three monthly period cycles before the divorce is finalized and then she is free to remarry. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 228:

“Divorced women remain in waiting [i.e., do not remarry] for three periods…”

As discussed earlier, this waiting time before the divorce is finalized has been set in order to allow emotions of both the husband and wife to calm down so that they can assess the positive and negative aspects of remaining married or getting divorced with a clear, unbiased and overly emotional mind so that they can make an informed decision which they will not later regret. This is the reason why a woman in her waiting period must remain in her husband’s home so that it is more likely they appreciate each other after their emotions have calmed down. This has been indicated at the end of the following verse. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 1:

“O Prophet, when you [Muslims] divorce women, divorce them for [the commencement of] their waiting period and keep count of the waiting period, and fear Allāh, your Lord. Do not turn them out of their [husbands'] houses, nor should they [themselves] leave [during that period] unless they are committing a clear immorality. And those are the limits [set by] Allāh. And

whoever transgresses the limits of Allāh has certainly wronged himself. You know not; perhaps Allāh will bring about after that a [different] matter."

However, this informed decision is not achieved when divorce occurs immediately and people often do not desire to change their mind out of self-respect and shame, which only adds stress to a person's regret. In addition, a waiting period prevents the couple who choose to divorce from rushing emotionally into another marriage, which will only lead to further problems for them. Finally, this time allows for a pregnancy to manifest and must not be concealed by the wife as the husband has a right to know before he decides on divorcing her or not. The presence of a child will undoubtedly affect the thought process of a husband in respect to divorcing his wife or not. This issue is so important that Allah, the Exalted, connected this with belief in Himself and Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 228:

"…and it is not lawful for them to conceal what Allāh has created in their wombs if they believe in Allāh and the Last Day…"

Yet again, Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that the relationship between people, such as a married couple, is directly connected to His obedience or disobedience. Sadly, many muslims completely separate the rights of Allah, the Exalted, from the rights of people and believe that Allah, the Exalted, is not concerned about the rights of people. As a result, these muslims are good at fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, such as the obligatory prayers, but are terrible at fulfilling the rights of people and often wrong them. This misguided belief must be avoided as it leads to trouble in both worlds. Justice will be established on Judgement Day. The one who wronged others

will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, the wrongdoer will take the sins of their victims. This may well cause the wrongdoer to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Therefore, it is vital to strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. In respect to people, this is best achieved when one treats others in a way they themself desire to be treated by people.

Allah, the Exalted, placed the responsibility of issuing a divorce or retracting it in the hands of the husband. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 228:

“…And their husbands have more right to take them back in this [period] if they want reconciliation…”

This is because, generally speaking, men are less emotional than women and are therefore less likely to issue divorce to their spouse based on emotions. In addition, as all the financial responsibilities of the household, including the wife and children, are on the husband, it is only fair he has the right to issue the divorce or retract it. But it is important to note that a husband can only take his wife back during the waiting period if they desire reconciliation. He cannot do it to cause harm to his wife, such as prolonging the divorce proceedings in order to make her life harder. This has been specifically warned against in the next verse and in other verses of the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 229:

“Divorce is twice. Then [after that], either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment…”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 228:

“…And their husbands have more right to take them back in this [period] if they want reconciliation. And due to them [i.e., the wives] is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable…”

The first thing to note is that Allah, the Exalted, mentioned the rights of women before mentioning the rights of men within a marriage. Therefore, the husband who fears Allah, the Exalted, will strive hard to fulfil the rights of his wife, even if she occasionally fails to fulfil his rights.

Generally speaking, a Muslim should never become so self-absorbed that they only care about the rights people owe them. Instead they should strive to fulfil the rights of others according to their means and strength in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, will not ask a person on Judgement Day if people fulfilled their rights, He will instead ask the person if they fulfilled the rights of people. Therefore, they should be more concerned with fulfilling the rights of people then only caring about the rights people owe them. In addition, striving to fulfil the rights of others is also an aspect of being sincere to them and the one who behaves in this manner will find the support of Allah, the Exalted, in respect to their rights.

In addition, during a time when women had no rights across the globe, it was Allah, the Exalted, that granted them it over 1400 years ago. For example, Islam has granted women such honour, as no other institution or faith ever has, such as placing Paradise, which is the ultimate bliss, beneath the feet of a woman, namely one's mother. This is confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3106. In another Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3895, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that the best man is the one who treats his wife in the best way. In the previous verses, Allah, the Exalted, indicated the importance of showing more care and respect to women during their monthly periods as it causes them pain. This extra care and respect was practically demonstrated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, towards his wives, and must be emulated. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 222:

“And they ask you about menstruation. Say, "It is pain,…””

Before Islam, in the age of ignorance, it was common practice for women to be equated with articles of home use. They would be bought and sold like cattle. A woman had no rights in respect to marriage. Far from being entitled to some share in the inheritance from her relatives, she herself was treated as a piece of the inheritance like other household items. She was considered as something owned by men while she was allowed to own nothing. And she could only spend according to the wishes of a man. Whereas, the man could spend any wealth which would belong to her, like wages, according to his desires. She did not even have the right to question this method. Some groups from Europe even considered women not to be human and equated

her with an animal. Women had no place in religion. They were considered unfit for worship. Some even declared women to possess no souls. It was considered completely normal for a father to kill his newborn or young daughter as they were seen as a shame on the family. Some even believed that no act of justice would be taken against the one who killed a woman. Some customs even killed the wife of a dead husband as she was not seen fit enough to live without him. Some even declared that the purpose of women was only to serve men.

But Allah, the Exalted, through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, taught man to respect all people, made justice and equity the law and men were made responsible for fulfilling the rights of women parallel to their own rights on them. Women were made free and independent. She became the owner of her own life and property, just like men. No man can force a woman to marry someone. If she is forced to without her consent then it becomes her choice to continue the marriage or annul it. No man has a right to spend anything from what belongs to her without her consent and approval. After the death of her husband or after divorce she becomes independent and she cannot be compelled by anyone to do anything. She gets a share in the inheritance like men according to the responsibilities given to her by Allah, the Exalted. To spend on women and treat them well has been declared an act of worship by Allah, the Exalted. All these rights and more have been given to women by none other than Allah, the Exalted. It is strange how those who stand up for women's rights today criticize Islam even though it gave women rights centuries earlier.

In the main verses under discussion, Allah, the Exalted, highlighted that the rights of the wife are equal to that of a husband and both must strive hard to fulfil each other's rights. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 228:

"…And due to them [i.e., the wives] is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men [i.e., husbands] have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]…"

The higher position within the household granted to the husband relates to their higher responsibility. It is the duty of a husband to financially provide for his wife, children and the household expenses. The wife has no financial responsibility within the household. In fact, generally speaking, she does not have any financial responsibility even before marriage, as her father was responsible for her and in elderly age, the responsibility falls on her children, if she is a widow or divorcee. This higher degree of responsibility is not something to celebrate or boast about as it means a man has more to answer for on the Day of Judgement. And the one who has their deeds scrutinized on the Day of Judgement will be punished. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 103. Therefore, only a fool desires more responsibilities which they will be held accountable for in the court of Allah, the Exalted. Women should therefore be pleased they were excused from these responsibilities instead of moaning about it. In addition, the Companion, Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, has reportedly said that this degree is an encouragement for men to behave well and spend their wealth appropriately on their wives because the one preferred must make a greater effort to adopt good character. This has been discussed in Tafsir Al Qurtubi, Volume 1, Page 580.

But even though husbands have been given a higher position within the family because of their extra responsibilities, Allah, the Exalted, warns them

not to abuse their position, as He will hold them accountable for this in both worlds, as no one can escape His might. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 228:

"…But the men [i.e., husbands] have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]. And Allāh is Exalted in Might…"

Allah, the Exalted, finishes verse 228 by reminding people as He alone possesses full and complete knowledge of all things, such as the mental and physical states of people and how to organize the family home, He alone is in the best position to grant people the code of conduct they need in order to achieve peace of mind within their family. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 228:

"…And Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 228:

"…And due to them [i.e., the wives] is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men [i.e., husbands] have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]…"

Generally speaking, as Allah, the Exalted, has set a single standard which makes one superior to others, muslims must strive to fulfil this single standard and leave all other worldly standards which differentiate between people, such as gender, ethnicity and social status. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…”

Righteousness involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to a balanced mental and physical state which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Therefore, the more righteous a person is, the better they are. All other standards which separate people, such as gender, must be ignored as they do not have any value in Islam. But it is important to note that as a person’s intention is hidden, people should not judge themself or others to be better than other people based on their outward actions. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 32:

“…So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him.”

Allah, the Exalted, then warned against the widespread culture of taking back one's wife in order to cause her pain and suffering. In fact, pre-Islam, the Arabs would not have a limit on how many times a husband could take back his wife during her waiting period and as a result, a wife would be stuck within her marriage indefinitely. Allah, the Exalted, corrected this and set the limit of taking one's wife back during her waiting period to twice and warned against mistreating them whether they decide on divorce or remaining married. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 229:

"Divorce is twice. Then [after that], either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment…"

Again, the command to treat the spouse well has been directed at the husband and indirectly includes the wife treating her husband in a good manner. Therefore, a husband must take the initial steps to treat his wife correctly according to the teachings of Islam and strive to fix any issues between them. It is amazing how in this day and age, wives often complain about the lack of enthusiasm from their husbands to seek outside help with their marriage issues, such as marriage counselling, even though Allah, the Exalted, has indicated that the husband should be more eager to fix the marriage issues, even if this means seeking help from outsiders.

In addition, maintaining good treatment, whether one divorces their spouse or remains with them, can be achieved when one treats their spouse in a way they desire their beloved to be treated by their spouse.

In a time where women were classified as household objects and were inherited by men, Allah, the Exalted, went a step further and made it clear that the dowry granted to the wife and any other gift given to her cannot be forcibly taken back from her by the husband or his family, as this would be classified as stealing. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 229:

"…And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them…"

A wife can voluntarily return the gifts to her husband if it helps her secure a divorce from him. But even in this case, as discussed earlier, before she, or the husband decide on divorce, they should involve outside people to help resolve the issues between them. The people who possess experience, Islamic knowledge and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, as the one who possesses these characteristics will be sincere and honest towards both sides. Relying on outside help has been indicated in the wording, as the plural has been used instead of the dual form, which would only indicate the husband and wife. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 229:

"…And it is not lawful for you to take anything of what you have given them unless both fear that they will not be able to keep [within] the limits of Allāh. But if you fear that they will not keep [within] the limits of Allāh, then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself…"

After discussing the importance of good treatment between spouses, especially during marriage difficulties, Allah reinforces the reality that mistreating each other is transgressing against His limits, even though a marriage and its issues are between two people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 229:

"…These are the limits of Allāh, so do not transgress them…"

As discussed earlier, it is vital to understand that the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people are linked in Islam and cannot be separated. Therefore, one must strive hard to fulfil both in order to achieve peace of mind and success. Fulfilling the rights of Allah, the Exalted, involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will aid one in fulfilling the rights of people, as it includes controlling one's behaviour towards others. In addition, a person must fulfil the rights of people according to Islamic teachings. This is best achieved when a person treats others in a way they themself desire to be treated by the general public. In fact, the one who loves for others what they love for themself is the definition of a believer. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

Whereas, the one who transgresses the limits of Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted will fail to obtain a balanced mental and physical state, which will prevent them obtaining peace of mind,

even if they experience moments of fun. This is quite evident when one observes the wealthy and how they are plagued with mental disorders, as they misuse the blessings they have been granted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

The stress caused by misusing the blessings one has been granted is similar to a large library of books which are not arranged in any order. As a result, a person looking for a specific book will face great stress finding it. Whereas, the one who looks for a specific book within a well-organized library will easily find it with minimal stress. This is similar to the person who uses the blessings they have been granted correctly, in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as this ensures all the worldly blessings one has been granted,

including the people within their life, is organized within their life correctly, just like the well-organized library of books.

And transgressing the limits of Allah, the Exalted, will cause one to wrong others. This wrongdoer will face justice in both worlds, especially on Judgement Day. The wrongdoer will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, they will take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may well cause the wrongdoer to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

A married couple should not reach a third declaration of divorce, as this contradicts the manner of divorce prescribed by Islam. But if they do, then a penalty for abusing the manner prescribed by Islam is put into effect. The divorced couple can no longer remarry, unless the wife marries someone else and consummates her marriage and then divorces her second husband or he dies. Marrying a woman with the intention to divorce so that she can remarry her first husband is forbidden. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2076. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 230:

“And if he has divorced her [for the third time], then she is not lawful to him afterward until [after] she marries a husband other than him…”

Sadly, there are many ignorant Muslims who believe that a divorce should not be done through words as they claim one can say it in a moment of anger

even though they do not fully mean it. The first thing to note is that if one follows the advice of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they would never pronounce all three divorces in one go. This has been strongly criticized by the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, he called behaving in this manner as mocking the Holy Quran. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 3430. The one who does so clearly cannot control their tongue especially, in such serious cases, therefore they are not mature enough to be married in the first place. Secondly, if one follows the advice given by Islam and gives divorce verbally on separate occasions, this allows for their emotions to calm down so that they can think things through before giving the next divorce. Finally, it is strange how a Muslim accepts that a person who was unlawful to them prior to marriage can become lawful to them through words yet object to the concept of ending a marriage through words. This objection is only fueled by one's ignorance and desires. If one must object to divorce through words they should object to marriage through words also. In addition, even giving three divorces separately is something which is disliked by Islam. This has been indicated by the previous verse, chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 229:

"Divorce is twice. Then [after that], either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with excellent treatment…"

One should instead give one divorce and let the waiting period end without taking back their wife as this would cause the marriage to end or at the most give two separate divorces and then let the waiting periods end. If this occurs then the couple can get re-married with a new marriage contract without the need for the wife to get married to someone else first. But if they do get re-

married then a single pronunciation of divorce would permanently separate the two, as two pronunciations have already been used in their first marriage.

Therefore, as discussed earlier, a Muslim must strive to control their tongue in all aspects of their life as an uncontrolled tongue leads to trouble in both worlds. In addition, they must adhere to the technique advised by Islam in all aspects of their life so that they avoid behaving in a hasty way which they later regret.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 230:

"And if he has divorced her [for the third time], then she is not lawful to him afterward until [after] she marries a husband other than him…"

Generally speaking, this warns muslims not to mock Islamic teachings by intentionally misinterpreting them or choosing when to implement them and went to ignore them according to one's desires. This ridicule is something they will answer for in both worlds, as it is not only disrespectful but also misrepresents Islam to the outside world. Just like an ambassador faces consequences when they misrepresent their nation, so will the muslim who intentionally misrepresents Islam, as representing Islam correctly is a duty on every muslim.

But as feelings change over time and as people can make mistakes they later regret, Allah, the Exalted, allows a couple to remarry after the second husband divorces his wife or if he dies. But this remarriage should only be pursued if the couple have learned from their past mistakes and are determined to make things work between them, which involves fulfilling the rights of each other according to Islamic teachings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 230:

"…And if he [i.e., the latter husband] divorces her [or dies], there is no blame upon them [i.e., the woman and her former husband] for returning to each other if they think that they can keep [within] the limits of Allāh…"

Allah, the Exalted, yet again makes it clear that the relationship between people and fulfilling the rights of others is directly connected to His obedience. Failing to treat others according to the teachings of Islam is crossing the limits of Allah, the Exalted, and must therefore be avoided at all costs. This is best achieved when one strives to treat others how they themself wish to be treated by other people.

Allah, the Exalted, alone is in the position to provide a code of conduct for humans to live by, such as the code of conduct between spouses, as He alone possesses full knowledge of the mental and physical state of humans, the different problems that can occur within marriage and how to correct them. Any other code of conduct will always be imperfect due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of marriage issues and the mental states of

spouses, even with the advancements made in this field. For example, a marriage counsellor, irrespective of their experience, will not know every aspect of the mental state of spouses and all the marriage issues between couples which vary between people, especially within different ethnicities, cultures and religions. All of this knowledge cannot be encompassed by people. Only Allah, the Exalted, alone has encompassed this and all other types of knowledge. Therefore, if one desires correct guidance in marriage, or any other aspect of life, then they must rely on the teachings of Islam to achieve a successful marriage and a comfortable family home, which is an important aspect of achieving peace of mind. Only those who possess Islamic knowledge can truly appreciate this truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 230:

"…These are the limits of Allāh, which He makes clear to a people who know [understand]."

As mentioned earlier, Allah, the Exalted repeatedly warns the husband to avoid causing distress to his wife if they choose to continue the marriage or divorce. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 231:

"And when you divorce women and they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms or release them according to acceptable terms, and do not keep them, intending harm, to transgress [against them]…"

Allah, the Exalted, then explains a universal principle through a specific example. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 231:

"And when you divorce women and they have [nearly] fulfilled their term, either retain them according to acceptable terms or release them according to acceptable terms, and do not keep them, intending harm, to transgress [against them]. And whoever does that has certainly wronged himself…"

The one who harms others is in reality harming themself, even if this is not obvious to them. This is because a person cannot escape the control of Allah, the Exalted, and they will therefore face the consequences of their actions in both worlds. In this world, the very things they possess will become a source of stress and misery for them, even if they experience moments of fun. In the hereafter, Allah, the Exalted, will establish justice which will cause the wrongdoer to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, the wrongdoer will take the sins of their victims. This may well cause the wrongdoer to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Therefore, one must avoid wronging others for their own sake, as the harm they cause will only rebound back to themself.

As mentioned earlier, muslims must avoid mocking Islam by verbally claiming faith in it but failing to practically act on it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 231:

“…And do not take the verses of Allāh in jest…”

This mocking will prevent them using the blessings they have been granted correctly and as a result it will lead to an unbalanced mental and physical state. This in turn leads to stress, misery and trouble in both worlds, even if one experiences moments of fun. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, this mocking will cause a muslim to misrepresent Islam to the outside world and as a result they will be guided away from it. This is

something every muslim will answer for, as they took on the responsibility of representing Islam correctly the moment they accepted Islam as their faith.

Instead, one must show gratitude for the guidance granted to them in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by learning and acting on them. They outline how a person should use the blessings they have been granted by Allah, the Exalted, so that they achieve a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds for an individual, a family and the wider society. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 231:

"…And remember the favor of Allāh upon you and what has been revealed to you of the Book and wisdom by which He instructs you…"

As mentioned earlier, as Allah, the Exalted, alone possesses knowledge of all things, especially the mental and physical state of people and how to solve all the issues a person or a society can face in this world, He alone can instruct mankind how to live in order to achieve peace of mind. All man-made instructions cannot achieve this outcome due to a lack of knowledge, foresight and biases.

Wisdom is mentioned in verse 231, as it teaches one how to use the knowledge they have been granted correctly so that it benefits them and others in both worlds. Islamic knowledge equips one with wisdom so that

they use all their worldly and religious knowledge correctly which ensures they use the blessings they have been granted correctly, which in turn leads to peace of mind. Without wisdom, a person will easily misuse the knowledge they possess. For example, scientific knowledge can lead to dangerous things being developed, such as a weapons, if wisdom is not applied. Whereas, the one who has wisdom will use their knowledge of science to create useful things, such as medicines. This wisdom is obtained through learning and acting on Islamic teachings.

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds muslims to adhere to the teachings of Islam so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds, even if it contradicts their desires and the advice of social media, fashion and culture. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 231:

“…And fear Allah and know that Allāh is Knowing of all things.”

A person must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Just like this wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on the advice of Islam. Whereas, the patient who rejects the advice of their doctor, as it contradicts their desires, will obtain poor mental and physical health and so will the person who rejects the teachings of Islam as it contradicts their desires. A doctor can make a mistake but as Allah, the Exalted, knows all things, the code of conduct He has granted mankind is guaranteed to lead to peace of mind in both worlds.

Whichever path a person chooses they will face the consequences of their choice in both worlds, as they cannot escape the power and knowledge of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 231:

"…And fear Allah and know that Allāh is Knowing of all things."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 232:

"And when you divorce women and they have fulfilled their term, do not prevent them from remarrying their husbands if they agree among themselves on an acceptable basis…"

This could mean that people should not cause trouble for divorced women which prevents them from getting married to someone else. Sadly, this often happens amongst muslims, whereby the family of the former husband will spread rumours about his former wife so that she finds it difficult to find another husband. This is an evil characteristic to adopt as no one would like their daughter to be treated in this manner so how can a muslim treat someone else's daughter in this way? Islam makes it clear that a person must treat others in a way they desire their loved ones to be treated by other people. In fact, this is the sign of a true believer according to a Hadith found

in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515. Destroying the reputation of others is a serious sin which must be avoided as it is a great act of disobedience towards Allah, the Exalted, and someone else. When one commits a serious sin like this, it often leads to destruction in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 232:

"And when you divorce women and they have fulfilled their term, do not prevent them from remarrying their husbands if they agree among themselves on an acceptable basis…"

This verse can also mean that the relatives of both sides should not prevent a divorced couple from remarrying each other, as long as they both learn from their past mistakes and resolve to fulfil the rights of each other in the future according to the teachings of Islam. This interpretation is supported by a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2981. During the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, a brother initially prevented his sister from remarrying her husband after he had divorced her once and the waiting period had elapsed. After this verse was revealed he sincerely submitted to the command of Allah, the Exalted, and allowed them to get remarried.

Allah, the Exalted, warns people not to block their lawful marriage as blocking is a form of declaring something unlawful when it has been made lawful by

Allah, the Exalted. This is such a serious issue that it directly challenges a person's claim of believing in Allah, the Exalted, and Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 232:

"…That is instructed to whoever of you believes in Allāh and the Last Day…"

Sadly, behaving in this manner whereby one acts as if something is unlawful when Allah, the Exalted, made it lawful, is something which often occurs amongst muslims. For example, many muslims will prevent their children from lawful marriages due to unislamic reasons, such as the spouse being from a different country then them. This is a serious issue as no one has the right to make things lawful or unlawful according to their desires as it directly challenges the authority of Allah, the Exalted. This must therefore be avoided at all costs. As ignorance is the main cause of this behaviour, one must learn and act on Islamic teachings to avoid it.

In addition, as indicated in verse 232, blocking a lawful marriage can often result in an unlawful relationship between the two, which only leads to trouble in both worlds for everyone involved. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 232:

"…That is better for you and purer…"

Whatever reasons the two families may have to prevent the marriage from occurring is based on a lack of knowledge of the future. In most cases, their choice is based on emotions not evidence. Therefore, they are not in a position to make this decision, only Allah, the Exalted, can make this decision as He knows all things. And as Allah, the Exalted, has made the marriage lawful, others should not attempt to make it unlawful. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 232:

"…and Allāh knows and you know not."

The following is some general advice for married muslims in order to avoid marriage difficulties which can lead to a divorce.

As mentioned earlier, a person must choose a spouse based on the teachings of Islam. As advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090, a person must choose a spouse who possesses piety. This will ensure they fulfil the rights of their spouse and avoid wronging them, even when they are angry, as they fear facing the consequences of their actions. Whereas, the one who does not fear Allah, the Exalted, will not fulfil the rights of their spouse and they will easily wrong them, as they do not fear the consequences of their choices and actions.

In addition, if a Muslim behaves as the Earth and supports their spouse at all times, then their spouse will become the sky for them by sheltering them

from harm. If a Muslim gives peace of mind and body to their spouse then in return they will become a pillar of financial, mental and physical support for them. If a Muslim strives to keep their spouse happy within the laws of Islam then they will find that their spouse in turn does the same. If they respect and honor their spouse they will receive the same. Meaning, what one gives is what they will receive.

A Muslim should be modest and only speak and act in a way which pleases Allah, the Exalted, and their spouse. They should be content with their marriage and what they possess as this is true richness and happiness. It is quite evident if one observes the media that fame and fortune does not bring happiness. In fact, the majority of celebrities end up divorced despite their fame and fortune. A Muslim should ensure they should adorn themself for their spouse while avoiding extravagance and waste as this is an aspect of maintaining the love they share. One should always be aware of the mood of their spouse and speak and act appropriately, as arguments can occur even if the right thing is said at the inappropriate time for example, when one is hungry or tired. A Muslim should appreciate the value of money and not waste it as this is disliked by Allah, the Exalted, and disliked by a spouse who fears Allah, the Exalted. The married couple should give top priority to educating themselves in religious matters and ensuring their children gain a good education in both worldly and religious matters. This education will strengthen the bond between them. A Muslim should try to fulfill the reasonable requests of their spouse as long as it does not challenge the commands of Allah, the Exalted, as constantly denying one’s spouse can lead to anger and arguments. Anything which occurs between them should be kept secret as revealing secrets can fracture the trust between a married couple. The only exception is when one seeks the advice of another but even then it should not become a public matter and should not be spread to too many people. A Muslim should, within limits, try to mirror the emotions of their spouse for example, they should not be openly happy when their spouse is sad as this can make a person believe their spouse does not care

about their feelings. A Muslim should learn to sacrifice and compromise for the sake of their spouse within the limits of Islam as this will cause their spouse to strive to keep them pleased. A good way to remember all this is that a Muslim should treat their spouse in the same way they would like their beloved to be treated by their spouse. For example, a husband should treat his wife the same way he would like his son-in-law to treat his daughter. Or a wife should treat her husband the same way she would like her daughter-in-law to treat her son. Adopting this mentality alone would be enough to solve countless problems within marriage.

Allah, the Exalted, then moves onto discussing the matter of taking care of children after a divorce. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 233:

“Mothers may nurse [i.e., breastfeed] their children two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the nursing [period]. Upon the father is their [i.e., the mothers'] provision and their clothing according to what is acceptable…”

The financial responsibility involved in raising their child is completely on the husband and the financial needs of the former wife during the period she breastfeeds their child is also on her former husband. As this duty has been set by Allah, the Exalted, a man must not ignore it as they will be held accountable for it in both worlds.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes clear that every duty within Islam can be fulfilled by people, as He does not charge a duty on a person they cannot complete nor does He decree a situation a person cannot face while maintaining obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 233:

"…No person is charged with more than his capacity…"

As this has been repeated throughout the Holy Quran, it leaves people with no excuses for failing to complete their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people, according to the teachings of Islam. Sadly, many people claim they are trying their best in fulfilling their duties yet fail to fulfil them. They must understand that if they were trying their best they would fulfill all their duties as this has been guaranteed by Allah, the Exalted, therefore, they are not trying their best. People must abandon laziness as poor excuses will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, as He knows best what people are capable of and has set duties for them accordingly.

Allah, the Exalted, then warns muslims to avoid using their children as a weapon to cause stress to their former spouse. Instead, each person must strive to fulfil the rights of their family according to the teachings of Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 233:

"…No mother should be harmed through her child, and no father through his child…"

The first thing to note is that harming the mother is mentioned before harming the father, through their child. This indicates that the father should be more sensitive and fearful of crossing this limit of Allah, the Exalted, and harming his former wife through their child. The father or mother should not belittle or disrespect each other in front of their child thereby aiming to diminish the love the child has for their parent. This is an evil devilish mentality as the role of a Muslim is to inculcate love and respect for others in the hearts of children. If they do the opposite the child will grow up not respecting or loving anyone and this will only increase the chances of their misguidance.

In addition, harming others in this way often happens within muslim marriages, whereby a person will use their child against their spouse in order obtain what they desire, such as moving to another home away from their spouse's relatives. Behaving in this manner is not a small thing as it has been prohibited directly in the Holy Quran. And behaving in this manner only causes more tension and problems between a couple, whether married or divorced, which only leads to more arguments and stress for everyone involved, especially the children.

Allah, the Exalted, also instructs the father's family to fulfil his responsibility towards his children and former wife in the case of his death. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 233:

"…And upon the [father's] heir is [a duty] like that [of the father]…"

Again, many muslim families overlook this instruction and are instead quick to abandon the former wife and children of their deceased relative, even though they must aid them according to the teachings of Islam. A family must try their best to fill the void left by their deceased relative in the life of his children so that they are raised in the correct way and therefore achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Families abandoning the children of their deceased relative in this way is a major cause for the misguidance of these children, which often leads them to a life of crime and prison.

As Allah, the Exalted, knows the bad behaviour people can show each other, He allows for alternate arrangements to be made to nurse the child if both parties agree. But mutual consultation and agreement must occur before any decisions over the children are made. Both the mother and father have a right to be involved in any decisions that are made regarding their child. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 233:

"…And if they both desire weaning through mutual consent from both of them and consultation, there is no blame upon either of them. And if you wish to have your children nursed by a substitute, there is no blame upon you as long as you give payment according to what is acceptable…"

Allah, the Exalted, then warns both parents to behave in the best interest of their child and not let any negative feelings for each other prevent this in anyway as Allah knows their intention, speech and actions and will hold them accountable in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 233:

"…And fear Allāh and know that Allāh is Seeing of what you do."

Generally speaking, muslims must strive to fulfil the rights of their children by providing them the tools to succeed, according to their means, in both their worldly and religious lives so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Sadly, many parents strive hard to ensure their children succeed in the world but fail to put the same effort into their religious development, even though the latter is more important and far reaching. Sending a child to the Mosque to learn how to recite the Holy Quran in a language they do not understand is not good enough. Each parent must teach their child the knowledge of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure their child accepts and acts on Islamic knowledge knowing it is best for them. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which will lead them to a balanced mental and physical state. This in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Failing in one's duty towards their children is a major cause of their misguidance, which is something every parent will answer for in both worlds. In this world, their child will become a source of stress and misery for them and what comes in the hereafter will be worse. A parent can only free themself of this stress if they strive to fulfil the rights of their children seeking the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted. Meaning, they should not seek any appreciation and payback from their children, as this only leads to bitterness, when their children fail to show them gratitude. And as they did not raise their children in order to please

Allah, the Exalted, they will not gain any reward from Him either. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 234-235

وَٱلَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوۡنَ مِنكُمۡ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزۡوَٰجٗا يَتَرَبَّصۡنَ بِأَنفُسِهِنَّ أَرۡبَعَةَ أَشۡهُرٖ وَعَشۡرٗاۖ فَإِذَا بَلَغۡنَ
أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ فِيمَا فَعَلۡنَ فِيٓ أَنفُسِهِنَّ بِٱلۡمَعۡرُوفِۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ خَبِيرٞ ٢٣٤
وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ فِيمَا عَرَّضۡتُم بِهِۦ مِنۡ خِطۡبَةِ ٱلنِّسَآءِ أَوۡ أَكۡنَنتُمۡ فِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمۡۚ عَلِمَ ٱللَّهُ
أَنَّكُمۡ سَتَذۡكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّآ أَن تَقُولُواْ قَوۡلٗا مَّعۡرُوفٗاۚ وَلَا تَعۡزِمُواْ
عُقۡدَةَ ٱلنِّكَاحِ حَتَّىٰ يَبۡلُغَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبُ أَجَلَهُۥۚ وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعۡلَمُ مَا فِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمۡ
فَٱحۡذَرُوهُۚ وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٞ ٢٣٥

"And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind - they, [the wives, shall] wait four months and ten [days]. And when they have fulfilled their term, then there is no blame upon you for what they do with themselves in an acceptable manner. And Allah is [fully] Aware of what you do.

There is no blame upon you for that to which you [indirectly] allude concerning a proposal to women or for what you conceal within yourselves. Allah knows that you will have them in mind. But do not promise them secretly except for saying a proper saying. And do not determine to undertake a marriage contract until the decreed period reaches its end. And know that Allah knows what is within yourselves, so beware of Him. And know that Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing."

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions the process a widow must adhere to after the death of her husband. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 234:

"*And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind - they, [the wives, shall] wait four months and ten [days]…"*

During this waiting period the widow is entitled to remain in her deceased husband's home and is financially supported by his wealth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 240:

"And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind - for their wives is a bequest: maintenance for one year without turning [them] out…"

Sadly, many muslim families fail to fulfil this important duty and instead abandon the wife of their deceased relative, even though this has been warned against in the Holy Quran.

The waiting period for the widow allows for a pregnancy to manifest itself, which will obviously affect her future choices. In addition, the waiting period allows the wife to mourn over her deceased husband, within the limits taught of Islam, without rushing into future choices and decisions which she may

later regret, such as marriage to someone else. After the waiting period has passed, the widow is free to either remain single or remarry. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 234:

"…And when they have fulfilled their term, then there is no blame upon you for what they do with themselves in an acceptable manner…"

As the plural word is used in this verse, it indicates the importance of the widow's relatives supporting her throughout her waiting period and in her future choices, such as marriage. It is even more important to support widows as they are in a difficult emotional state and are therefore more susceptible to making the wrong choices. Widows have been given a high status within Islam and must be supported according to one's means, such as emotional, physical and financial support, especially by her relatives. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6006, that a person can gain the same reward as the one who fasts every day and offers the voluntary prayer every night if they financially support a widow.

It is important to note that this verse also puts the widow's future choices in her hands, therefore, her relatives and the relatives of her deceased husband should not force her to make certain decisions, such as remaining single, if she desires to get married again. The role of the relatives is to support the widow emotionally, financially and physically, it is not to force her to make certain choices that please them. In addition, after the waiting period has elapsed, the widow should not feel like she has to live in a way which pleases her relatives or the relatives of her deceased husband. Allah, the Exalted,

has acknowledged her feelings and has granted her the freedom to make her own choices about her future and she should therefore not be influenced by stigma, the feelings of others or the opinions of social media, fashion and culture. As Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's intention, speech and actions, both the widow and her relatives must behave in the manner prescribed by Islam as they will all be held accountable for it in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 234:

"…And Allah is [fully] Aware of what you do."

This yet again indicates the importance of understanding that the relationship between people and worldly matters are directly connected to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and the rights of people are directly connected and neither should be neglected.

Allah, the Exalted, then outlines that a proposal made to a widow, or a divorcee, must be done in a correct and respectful manner. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 235:

"There is no blame upon you for that to which you [indirectly] allude concerning a proposal to women or for what you conceal within yourselves. Allah knows that you will have them in mind. But do not promise them secretly except for saying a proper saying…"

A proper saying includes being open about the proposal and including the relatives of both sides instead of secretly promising the widow directly. A man should discuss the possibility of marriage in a dignified manner with the widow's family so that his good and noble intention is made clear to all. He should discuss it in a way he would like a man to discuss the possibility of marriage with his daughter or sister. As a widow is going through an emotional time, any secret proposals that are not suitable for her may be accepted, which will only add to her long term stress. Whereas, a proposal made public which involves the relatives of the widow can be dealt with in the correct manner whereby hasty decisions are avoided.

In addition, the waiting period must elapse first before a new marriage contract is undertaken. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 235:

"…*And do not determine to undertake a marriage contract until the decreed period reaches its end…"*

Some of the benefits of the waiting period have already been discussed earlier. Muslims must therefore adhere to the method prescribed by Allah, the Exalted, as it is the only way hasty decisions which one later regrets can be avoided while the best care is provided to the widow so that she can more easily move on with her life after the death of her husband. One must not ignore the commands of Islam as they will only cause trouble to themself and others, even if the commands contradict their desires. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor

knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will obtain good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on the teachings of Islam. The one who fails to do so will not escape the consequences of their choices, as Allah, the Exalted, knows their intention, speech and actions and will hold them accountable in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 235:

"…*And know that Allah knows what is within yourselves, so beware of Him…"*

But as Islam is a religion of balance and mercy, the door of forgiveness and mercy is always open for them, even if they have disobeyed Allah, the Exalted, in the past. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 235:

"…*And know that Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing."*

Generally speaking, sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble, one must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

The command to know the specific divine attributes mentioned in verse 235, indicates the importance of gaining and acting on Islamic knowledge so that one is encouraged to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, according to the teachings of Islam without adopting deviated beliefs about Him which are disrespectful and are in some cases blasphemous. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2736, that whoever knows the ninety nine names of Allah, the Exalted, will enter Paradise. In addition, learning the divine attributes allows one to act on them according to their human potential. For example, the one who knows Allah, the Exalted, is All Merciful, will show mercy to others for the sake of Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 235:

"…*And know that Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing."*

The widow and her relatives must act on these two divine names so that they receive the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. The widow should strive to forgive her deceased husband for any mistakes he made and patiently accept the decree of Allah, the Exalted, knowing it is best for everyone involved, even if the wisdoms behind His choice are hidden from her. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

In addition, the widow’s relatives should also show forbearance during the death of their relative and put any differences between them and the widow to one side and support her according to the teachings of Islam.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 236-237

لَّا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِن طَلَّقْتُمُ ٱلنِّسَآءَ مَا لَمْ تَمَسُّوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا۟ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً ۚ وَمَتِّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى ٱلْمُوسِعِ
قَدَرُهُۥ وَعَلَى ٱلْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُۥ مَتَٰعًۢا بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾

وَإِن طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِن قَبْلِ أَن تَمَسُّوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّآ أَن
يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوَا۟ ٱلَّذِى بِيَدِهِۦ عُقْدَةُ ٱلنِّكَاحِ ۚ وَأَن تَعْفُوٓا۟ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ وَلَا تَنسَوُا۟
ٱلْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٧﴾

"There is no blame upon you if you divorce women you have not touched [been intimate with] nor specified for them an obligation. But give them [a gift of] compensation - the wealthy according to his capability and the poor according to his capability - a provision according to what is acceptable, a duty upon the doers of good.

And if you divorce them before you have touched them and you have already specified for them an obligation, then [give] half of what you specified - unless they forego the right or the one in whose hand is the marriage contract foregoes it. And to forego it is nearer to righteousness. And do not forget graciousness between you. Indeed Allah, of whatever you do, is Seeing."

Allah, the Exalted, then moves onto discussing the issue of divorce before the marriage is consummated. There is no waiting period specified in these verses as there is no chance of a pregnancy and there is no point forcing the couple to live together during a waiting period if they are adamant they do not wish to officially begin married life together as this may cause unnecessary emotional trauma that may affect their future choice of getting married again. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 236:

"*There is no blame upon you if you divorce women you have not touched [been intimate with] nor specified for them an obligation…"*

But in the case where the dowry has not been set, Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that an excellent muslim would give his former wife a parting gift in order to end things on a positive note. This gift should be given according to one's means and according to the social norm within the society while avoiding extravagance. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 236:

"…But give them [a gift of] compensation - the wealthy according to his capability and the poor according to his capability - a provision according to what is acceptable, a duty upon the doers of good."

Generally speaking, this has always been the principle of Islam. A person is only given a duty according to their means and they are only subjected to

tests that they can face while maintaining the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…”

Therefore, muslims must avoid making excuses for failing in their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people. Sadly, many muslims claim to trying their best without realizing that if they were actually trying their best they would undoubtedly fulfill their duties, as this has been guaranteed by Allah, the Exalted. Adopting this lazy attitude only prevents one from fulfilling their duties and must therefore be avoided. Every command, prohibition and test one faces can be successfully fulfilled if they truly try their best. And whenever they happen to commit a sin, the door of sincere repentance is always open to them. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. Allah, the Exalted, therefore does not expect perfection, rather He expects people to sincerely strive to fulfil their duties.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 236:

“…a duty upon the doers of good.”

Islam always advises muslims to strive for excellence of faith. This is achieved when one sincerely learns and acts on Islamic teachings so that they use all the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. This will ensure they fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. This excellence leads to a balanced mental and physical state which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who adopts a lazy attitude whereby they do not strive to learn and act on Islamic knowledge, will easily misuse the blessings they have been granted. As a result, they will fail to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted and people. Their attitude will prevent them from achieving a balanced mental and physical state, which will prevent them from achieving peace of mind, even if they experience moments of fun. This outcome is quite evident when one observes those who misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as the rich and famous. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, a person must accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake, even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings. This is because the only One who has the knowledge required to ensure a person achieves a balanced mental and physical state is Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the mental and physical states of humans possessed by society will never be enough to achieve this outcome, despite all the research that has been undertaken, as they cannot solve every issue a person can face within their life nor can their advice cause one to avoid all types of mental and physical stress due to limited knowledge, experience and foresight. Allah, the Exalted, alone has this knowledge and He has granted it to mankind in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This truth is obvious

when one observes those who use the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings and those who do not.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 237:

"*And if you divorce them before you have touched them and you have already specified for them an obligation, then [give] half of what you specified…"*

In the case a divorce occurs before the marriage is consummated and the dowry has been set, then the man must give half of it to his former wife. Sadly, many muslim men fail to give the dowry to their wives whether they remain married or seek a divorce, even though it is a duty to give it and an aspect of the marriage contract. This is a serious issue which will be questioned about on Judgement Day.

Allah, the Exalted, then encourages the former wife and her relatives to forgo the dowry in order to further ensure the divorce ends on good terms. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 237:

"*And if you divorce them before you have touched them and you have already specified for them an obligation, then [give] half of what you specified*

- unless they forego the right or the one in whose hand is the marriage contract foregoes it. And to forego it is nearer to righteousness…"

This could also mean that the former husband should forgo the command to give half the set dowry to his former wife and instead give her the whole thing as a gesture of kindness, as the marriage contract is in his hands. This has been mentioned in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 1, Pages 666-667. This again indicates the importance of kind treatment between the divorced couple and their relatives.

This verse also indicates the importance of the woman's relatives being involved in her decision of choosing a husband. This is because, in most cases, the consequences of a woman choosing the wrong husband is more serious to her mental and physical health, than a man choosing the wrong wife. For example, domestic violence against the wife is far more common than domestic violence against the husband. In addition, in some cases, her male relatives, such as her brother, will more easily identify negative characteristics within the character of a potential husband than she can, as men understand other men better than women do. Just like women understand other women better than men do.

In addition, through the main verses, Allah, the Exalted, again indicates the importance of good behaviour between the divorced couple and their relatives and connects it to righteousness, something which is connected to His obedience. Sadly, many muslims often separate the rights and duties towards Allah, the Exalted, from the rights and duties towards people, even though Islam has joined them. A person will not achieve peace of mind in

both worlds until they fulfil both aspects, as they will answer for their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and people, in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 237:

"….And do not forget graciousness between you. Indeed Allah, of whatever you do, is Seeing."

A person should remember that if they wrong others justice will be established on Judgement Day, even if they fulfil their duties towards Allah, the Exalted. The wrongdoer will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims and if necessary, the wrongdoer will take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may well cause the wrongdoer to be hurled into Hell. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. One can fulfil the instruction of showing graciousness to others by treating others in a way one desires to be treated by society. In fact, loving for others what one loves for themself is the very definition of a true believer according to the Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2515.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 238-239

حَٰفِظُواْ عَلَى ٱلصَّلَوَٰتِ وَٱلصَّلَوٰةِ ٱلۡوُسۡطَىٰ وَقُومُواْ لِلَّهِ قَٰنِتِينَ ﴿٢٣٨﴾

فَإِنۡ خِفۡتُمۡ فَرِجَالًا أَوۡ رُكۡبَانٗاۖ فَإِذَآ أَمِنتُمۡ فَٱذۡكُرُواْ ٱللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُم مَّا لَمۡ تَكُونُواْ تَعۡلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾

"Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle prayer and stand before Allah, devoutly obedient.

And if you fear [an enemy, then pray] on foot or riding. But when you are secure, then remember Allah [in prayer], as He has taught you that which you did not [previously] know."

The previous and next set of verses discuss marriage issues, such as divorce, and in between Allah, the Exalted, discussed the importance of establishing the obligatory prayers. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 238:

"*Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers…"*

One of the reasons is that Allah, the Exalted, is reminding all the people involved in marriage issues, such as the married couple and their relatives, to not forget the importance of their duties towards Allah, the Exalted, during the stress they are facing. Allah, the Exalted, gives guidance for them to minimize the stress they are facing during the marriage difficulties but also encourages them to continue fulfilling their other duties, such as the obligatory prayers. Maintaining one's connection to Allah, the Exalted, is extremely vital in all situations, especially during times of difficulties. One should therefore not let worldly stresses, such as marriage issues, prevent them from their other duties otherwise they will lose the mercy they need to correctly handle their worldly stresses.

In addition, as the five daily obligatory prayers are a regular reminder of Judgement Day, two specific benefits are derived from this regular reminder for those who are facing marriage problems. The first is that it encourages the one who is facing marriage issues, as well as other worldly problems, of the bigger and more serious reality of Judgement Day. As the stress of Judgement Day far outweighs any stress one can face in this world, remembering it reduces the seriousness of worldly stresses. This will aid one in correctly dealing with marriage issues without feeling overwhelmed. This is just like making a problem seem smaller when comparing it to a bigger

problem and stress. The second benefit of regularly remembering Judgement Day is that it reminds one that they will be held accountable for their intentions, speech and actions in both worlds. Therefore, the one who is facing marriage difficulties will ensure they speak and behave in the correct way, according to Islamic teachings, towards their former spouse and their relatives, as they know they will be held accountable for their actions. Both of these benefits are crucial for one to correctly face marriage issues, and other worldly problems, so that they overcome these difficulties while obtaining peace of mind and so that they correctly prepare for Judgement Day, which is the primary purpose of all people.

In addition, as the one who maintains their obedience of Allah, the Exalted, such as establishing their obligatory prayers, will treat their spouse correctly out of fear of being held accountable on Judgement Day, this indicates the importance of choosing a spouse who possesses these qualities. Only the person who possesses these qualities will treat their spouse in the correct way, even when they are angry with them. Whereas, the one who does not possess these qualities will easily wrong their spouse and fail to fulfil their rights, especially when they are angry with them. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 238:

"*Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers…"*

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling them with their full conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. Establishing the obligatory prayers is often repeated in the Holy Quran as it is the most important practical proof of one's faith in Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as discussed earlier, as the daily prayers are all spread out, they act as a constant reminder of the Day of Judgement and practically preparing for it, as each stage of the obligatory prayer is connected to Judgement Day. When one stands up right, this is how they will stand in front of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verses 4-6:

"Do they not think that they will be resurrected. For a tremendous Day The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?"

When they bow, it reminds them of the many people who will be criticized on Judgement Day for not bowing to Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. Chapter 77 Al Mursalat, verse 48:

"And when it is said to them, "Bow [in prayer]," they do not bow."

This criticism also includes not practically submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of one's life. When one prostrates in the prayer, it reminds them of how people will be invited to prostrate to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. But those who did not prostrate correctly to Him during their lives on Earth, which involves obeying Him in all aspects of their

lives, will not be able to do this on Judgement Day. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verses 42-43:

"On the Day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so. Their eyes humbled, humiliation will cover them. And they used to be invited to prostration while they were sound."

When one sits on their knees in the prayer, it reminds them of how they will be sitting in this position in front of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement, fearing their final judgement. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 28:

"And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do.""

The one who prays with these elements in mind will establish their prayers correctly. This in turn will ensure they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in between the prayers. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

"…Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing…"

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 238:

"*Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle prayer…"*

The middle prayer could be the late afternoon prayer (Asr) or the dawn prayer (Fajar). The Islamic calendar places the night before the day. So according to this method, the first prayer of the day would be the sunset prayer (Magrib) and therefore, the middle prayer becomes the dawn prayer (Fajar). Whereas, if the first prayer of the day is considered in respect to daylight then it would mean that the first prayer would be the dawn prayer (Fajar). According to this method the middle prayer becomes the late afternoon prayer (Asr). Many scholars have opted for the late afternoon prayer (Asr) as the middle prayer. This has been supported by Hadiths, such as the one found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2983. Either way one should aim to establish both as this leads to establishing the rest of the obligatory prayers. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 574, where the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised that whoever establishes the two cool obligatory prayers will enter Paradise. The two cool obligatory prayers refer to the dawn prayer (Fajar)

and the late afternoon prayer (Asr), as the temperature tends to be cooler at these times. As these two obligatory prayers are arguably the hardest to establish, as they occur at difficult times or times when people are often distracted by other things, the one who establishes them will find it easier to establish the other obligatory prayers.

The one who establishes their obligatory prayers will be encouraged to remain sincerely obedient to Allah, the Exalted, throughout their day and throughout every situation they face, such as marriage problems. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 238:

“Maintain with care the [obligatory] prayers and [in particular] the middle prayer and stand before Allah, devoutly obedient.”

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This will ensure one fulfils the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. This leads to a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

A person must accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake, even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings. This is because the only One who has the knowledge required to ensure a person achieves a balanced mental and physical state is Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the mental and physical states of humans possessed by society will never be enough to achieve this outcome, despite all the research that has been undertaken, as they cannot solve every issue a person can face within their life nor can their advice cause one to avoid all types of mental and physical stress due to limited knowledge, experience and foresight. Allah, the Exalted, alone has this knowledge and He has granted it to mankind in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This truth is obvious when one observes those who use the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings and those who do not. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 238:

“…stand before Allah, devoutly obedient.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 239:

“And if you fear [an enemy, then pray] on foot or riding. But when you are secure, then remember Allah [in prayer], as He has taught you…”

In connection to the surrounding verses which discuss marriage issues, this verse could indicate the importance of maintaining one’s connection to Allah, the Exalted, during times of difficulty, such as marriage problems, and during times of ease. As mentioned earlier, maintaining this connection is vital for one to receive the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and to maintain one’s focus on sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 239:

“And if you fear [an enemy, then pray] on foot or riding. But when you are secure, then remember Allah [in prayer], as He has taught you…”

This verse also indicates the easy nature of Islam. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 185:

“…Allāh intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship…”

Islam has been revealed by Allah, the Exalted, the One who created people and best knows what is suited for their nature and lives. Just like a doctor is best suited to advise a sick person, Allah, the Exalted, is best suited to advise people on every aspect of their lives. It is strange how a person can trust a doctor, who is prone to making mistakes and who possesses very limited knowledge and foresight while the patient is unaware of how the medicines they are prescribed work within the human body, yet they fail to trust Allah, the Exalted, who knows all things and cannot make mistakes and instead doubt that acting on what He advises leads to peace of mind and body. Trusting in Allah, the Exalted, only occurs when one learns and acts on Islamic knowledge and the clear proofs therein, such as the promise of Allah, the Exalted, of aiding those who sincerely obey Him and the events in history and present time which supports this promise. And how disobeying Him, by misusing the blessings one has been granted, leads to stress and trouble in both worlds and the events of history and present time which supports this warning. These clear proofs will cause one to adopt certainty of faith, which in turn will encourage them to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This leads to a balanced mental and physical state which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 239:

“And if you fear [an enemy, then pray] on foot or riding. But when you are secure, then remember Allah [in prayer], as He has taught you…”

This verse also indicates the importance of understanding that remembering Allah, the Exalted, is more than just verbally mentioning His name and divine attributes. The real remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, involves remembering Allah, the Exalted, in one’s intention, so that they only act in order to please Him. Those who act in order to please others will not gain reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A positive sign of a good intention is when one does not desire nor hope for any gratitude or payback from people. Remembering Allah, the Exalted, with the tongue involves speaking good or remaining silent. And remembering Allah, the Exalted, in one's actions involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. When all aspects of the remembrance of Allah, the Exalted, are fulfilled it leads to a balanced mental and physical state, as a person will place everything and everyone within their lives in the correct place. This in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 13 Ar Ra’d, verse 28:

“…Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace."

As indicated in the end of verse 239, adopting this behaviour is also how one shows gratitude to Allah, the Exalted, for all the blessings He has granted them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 239:

“…then remember Allāh [in prayer], as He has taught you that which you did not [previously] know.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 240-242

وَٱلَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَٰجًا وَصِيَّةً لِّأَزْوَٰجِهِم مَّتَٰعًا إِلَى ٱلْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ
إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِى مَا فَعَلْنَ فِىٓ أَنفُسِهِنَّ مِن مَّعْرُوفٍ
وَٱللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٠﴾

وَلِلْمُطَلَّقَٰتِ مَتَٰعٌۢ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٤١﴾

كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٤٢﴾

“And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind - for their wives is a bequest: maintenance for one year without turning [them] out. But if they leave [of their own accord], then there is no blame upon you for what they do with themselves in an acceptable way. And Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.

And for divorced women is a provision according to what is acceptable - a duty upon the righteous.

Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you might use reason.”

Allah, the Exalted, then continues discussing the situation of a widow. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 240:

"*And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind - for their wives is a bequest: maintenance for one year without turning [them] out…"*

As the widow is going through an extremely emotional time, she should remain within her husband's home instead of being uprooted, which only increases one's stress. In addition, to help the widow manage her grief, she must be financially supported from her deceased husband's estate or supported by his relatives. Sadly, this duty is often overlooked by the deceased husband's relatives and they often send the widow back to her relatives, even though aiding her is a duty on them according to the Holy Quran. Allah, the Exalted, put these rules into place in order to emotionally, physically and financially aid the widow and must therefore be fulfilled by muslims. They must treat the widow of their deceased relative, how they desire their own relative to be treated if their husband died.

In order to reconcile the different verses which discuss how long a widow should remain in her deceased husband's home, a widow must remain in the home during her waiting period of four months and ten days and then she can either remain for the rest of the year or leave after her waiting period is over. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 234:

“And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind - they, [the wives, shall] wait four months and ten [days]….”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 240:

“And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind - for their wives is a bequest: maintenance for one year without turning [them] out. But if they leave [of their own accord]…”

In addition, the maintenance for one year could have been explained in detail in the following verse or could be considered separate to the specific inheritance allocated to the widow in this verse. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 12:

“…And for them [i.e., the wives] is one fourth if you leave no child. But if you leave a child, then for them is an eighth of what you leave, after any bequest you [may have] made or debt…”

The waiting period for the widow allows for a pregnancy to manifest itself, which will obviously affect her future choices. In addition, the waiting period allows the widow to mourn over her deceased husband, within the limits of Islam, without rushing into future choices and decisions which she may later

regret, such as marriage to someone else. After the waiting period has passed, the widow is free to either remain single or remarry. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 240:

"…But if they leave [of their own accord], then there is no blame upon you for what they do with themselves in an acceptable way…"

As the plural word is used in this verse, it indicates the importance of the widow's relatives supporting her throughout her waiting period and in her future choices, such as marriage. It is even more important to support widows as they are in a difficult emotional state and are therefore more susceptible to making the wrong choices. Widows have been given a high status within Islam and must be supported according to one's means, such as emotional, physical and financial support, especially by her relatives. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 6006, that a person can gain the same reward as the one who fasts every day and offers the voluntary prayer every night if they financially support a widow.

It is important to note that this verse also puts the widow's future choices in her hands, therefore, her relatives and the relatives of her deceased husband should not force her to make certain decisions, such as remaining single, if she desires to get married again. The role of the relatives is to support the widow emotionally, financially and physically, it is not to force her to make certain choices that please them. In addition, after the waiting period has elapsed, the widow should not feel like she has to live in a way which pleases her relatives or the relatives of her deceased husband. Allah, the Exalted,

has acknowledged her feelings and has granted her the freedom to make her own choices about her future and she should therefore not be influenced by stigma, the feelings of others or the opinions of social media, fashion and culture. As Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of one's intention, speech and actions, both the widow and her relatives must behave in the manner prescribed by Islam as they will all be held accountable in both worlds. In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, is All Wise, He alone can prescribe the best code of conduct people should follow, such as widows, in order to achieve peace of mind. Therefore, the opinions of people which contradict His advice should be ignored. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 240:

"…And Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise."

After discussing the good treatment of widows, Allah, the Exalted, then finishes the discussion on marriage by indicating the importance of good treatment towards divorced women. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 241:

"And for divorced women is a provision according to what is acceptable - a duty upon the righteous."

During the waiting period, divorced women must be maintained by their former husband and during the period when they are nursing their child. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 233:

“Mothers may nurse [i.e., breastfeed] their children two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the nursing [period]. Upon the father is their [i.e., the mothers'] provision and their clothing according to what is acceptable…”

By declaring that treating divorced women in the best manner is a duty on the righteous, indicates that a person cannot achieve piety until they behave in this manner, even if they fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted. This yet again indicates the importance of understanding that the relationship between people and worldly matters are directly connected to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and the rights of people are directly connected and neither should be neglected.

In addition, this verse indicates the importance of choosing a spouse who has piety. This is because they are the only one who will fulfill the rights of their spouse, according to the teachings of Islam, even when they are angry with them. Whereas, the one who does not possess piety will mistreat their spouse and fail to fulfil their rights, especially when they are angry with them. Choosing a spouse based on their piety has been advised throughout Islamic teachings, such as the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 5090.

The discussion in this and the previous section of verses will only be accepted and acted upon by those who use their common sense and identify the widespread benefits of its advice and teachings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 242:

“Thus does Allāh make clear to you His verses that you might use reason.”

It is vital to understand that any man-made law or code of conduct will never be perfect as it will be biased, short-sighted and limited by knowledge. This will prevent people from achieving a balanced mental and physical state within their lives, which in turn will prevent them from achieving peace of mind. Whereas, the code of conduct granted by Allah, the Exalted, will always be perfect as He knows all things, including the mental and physical states of humans, something no society can ever encompass fully in knowledge even with the research that has been carried out on this topic. Therefore, Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who can grant people a code of conduct which leads to a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind. Just like a doctor is the best person to advise on medicine, Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who can provide the best advice in every aspect of one’s life. In addition, as the teachings of Islam are designed for the nature of humans, they are timeless, just like the nature of humans is timeless. And the teachings of Islam can be acted upon by anyone, irrespective of their level of knowledge, as they are easy to understand and apply in one’s life. Whereas, the vast majority of advice given by others, such as motivational speakers, is impractical, even if they sound exciting. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 242:

“Thus does Allāh make clear to you His verses that you might use reason.”

This is a fitting way of ending around twenty consecutive verses which discuss the extremely important constitution of marriage, divorce, the children of the divorced couple and widows.

Even though there are many worldly issues people can face yet all of them have not been addressed by the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran addresses the root problems instead of addressing the branch problems. Fixing one branch problem will eventually lead to another branch problem. Whereas, targeting the root problem eliminates all the branch problems indefinitely. In this case, the Holy Quran did not discuss every issue a married couple can experience instead it discussed the root issue and how to deal with them appropriately. For a marriage to work and the rights of both spouses to be fulfilled, good character between the couple and fearing Allah, the Exalted, is required. Instead of forcing unhappy married couples to stay together, Allah, the Exalted, has given them a lawful way out namely, divorce. But He has made it clear that good character and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, must be maintained throughout the divorce proceedings, which minimizes the physical and emotional stress the wife, husband and children will go through. Allah, the Exalted, has commanded each wife and husband to fulfill the rights of the children involved during a divorce so that the negative impact of the divorce is minimized. This tactic again addresses a root problem which leads to countless branch problems. If one observes the children which do not succeed in education and often end up in criminal gangs, juvenile courts, detention centers and prisons, they will observe that they come from unhappy or broken families where their parents, whether together or divorced, fail to fulfil the rights of each other and the rights of the child.

Allah, the Exalted, encourages marriage and forbids unlawful relationships. When a couple are not truly devoted to each other, like a married couple,

then any real difficulties they face will lead to more emotional stress for the couple, as they fail to support each other correctly. Coming in and out of multiple relationships over one's life undoubtedly has a detrimental effect on their mental health. It is no surprise that those who separate from their partners often end up in counselling. They end up suffering from mental disorders, such as depression, more than those who avoid these relationships. In addition, those who are known within the society for having multiple partners are less likely to find a suitable spouse who will fulfill their rights. This is because the one who has had multiple partners within their life will adopt a loose and undesirable character, which people looking for a serious commitment, such as marriage, would dislike. This will only increase the emotional stress for the one who has had multiple partners. In casual relationships, the couple are often not on the same wavelength. Meaning, one of the two always takes the relationship more seriously, such as desiring to settle down with their partner. Whereas, the other does not feel the same about their future. When this difference in attitude eventually surfaces it often leads to long standing emotional trauma for the one who took the relationship more seriously. Whereas, a married couple from the very first step are on the same wavelength, in respect to their long-term commitment to one another. A married couple are devoted to each other in every situation, whether they face situations which are planned or unplanned, such as having children. This attitude is very rarely found amongst normal couples. Having a relationship with another also fools a person into believing they completely know their partner and so if they do get married they often complain about their spouse changing after marriage. In most cases, they did not change. The things that changed were the responsibilities and pressures of their relationship. This issue often leads to marriage issues for those couples who were in a relationship prior to their marriage. Even if they live together prior to marriage, even then the same issue will occur. In addition, it is no secret that whenever one faces trouble with their partner how severely it affects every other aspect of their life. For example, many young people drop out of education simply because they cannot face seeing their former partner every day. As marriage is a deep connection and commitment between two people, they are less likely to breakup over the same petty issues normal couples breakup over.

In addition, a person must not be fooled into the outward appearance of an unlawful relationship believing there is no harm in it for the couple or the wider society. As people have limited knowledge, are extremely short sighted and are often controlled by their emotions, they can incorrectly believe having a relationship outside marriage is harmless whereas they fail to see the hidden poison which will negatively affect them and others. A muslim in an unlawful relationship will only be encouraged to take further steps and commit sins with their partner, over time. As emotions and feelings are difficult to control and as these sins, such as fornication, have become normalized within most societies, a non-married couple may easily fall into these sins. This leads to countless other problems for them and society, such as unwanted pregnancies and even belittling other major sins within Islam. In addition, even if one does not commit any other major sins within their unlawful relationship, such as fornication, then their feelings will prevent them from thinking clearly and as a result they may well marry their partner, without realizing they are not a suitable spouse, even if they seemed to be a good partner. As discussed earlier, this is because the stress and responsibilities of marriage, such as fulfilling the rights of one's spouse and children, change the relationship between the couple, which in turn often leads to marriage problems. This is why married couples who were together before marriage often accuse each other of changing their behaviour after marriage. In addition, no matter how much time one spends with their partner, they will never get to know their character like a married couple know each other. Hidden negative characteristics in each of them will become manifest after marriage, which only leads to further marriage problems. A truth which is often overlooked by someone who is in an illegal relationship is that a person who makes a good partner is not guaranteed to make a good spouse or a good parent. This is because different characteristics are required to make a good spouse and parent compared to making a good partner. Because of their feelings for their partner, a person will often overlook the importance of choosing a pious person to marry, as they are the only one who will fulfill the rights of their spouse and children and will

avoid harming them, even when they are angry. Whereas, a person who does not have piety, will not fulfill the rights of their spouse or children and will wrong them, especially when they are angry. The one who has a partner will overlook this important point and as a result they will marry their partner because of their feelings for them, even if they do not possess piety. Emotions, such as love, make a person blind and deaf to the negative characteristics of their beloved. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 5130.

In addition, any children that are born unintentionally from the relationship will put further stress on their relationship, which often results in them splitting up, as they do not desire to share the responsibility of raising a child. This creates a broken home for the child to grow up in where they do not have the support and supervision of both parents, which often leads to trouble for everyone. It is a clear fact that the majority of youth involved in crimes, gangs and those children who are groomed by sexual predators and are victims of domestic violence, come from broken families. Raising a child correctly when one desires a child is extremely hard, then can one imagine the emotional stress of raising a child correctly when the parent did not desire to have the child in the first place? This negatively effects the upbringing of the child and often leads to the problems mentioned earlier. This stress often leads to the single parent giving up the child for fostering or adoption, which in the majority of cases, has a detrimental negative and long term impact on the child, some of which were mentioned earlier. This further increases the chances of the child becoming misguided.

All of these and more negative things within unlawful relationships cannot be appreciated by someone who is emotional or ignorant, even if unlawful relationships appear harmless. Getting involved in unlawful relationships is

just like consuming a meal which appears delicious when it is in fact poisoned. As this poison is hidden, one must rely on someone who is aware of this poison and trust their advice to avoid eating the meal which appears delicious, even if this contradicts their desires. As Allah, the Exalted, alone knows all things, especially, the hidden poisons within certain actions and relationships, His advice must be accepted and acted upon, even if it contradicts one's desires. This is similar to a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings. This is because the only One who has the knowledge required to ensure a person achieves a balanced mental and physical state is Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the mental and physical states of humans possessed by society will never be enough to achieve this outcome, despite all the research that has been undertaken, as they cannot solve every issue a person can face within their life nor can their advice cause one to avoid all types of mental and physical stress due to limited knowledge, experience and foresight. Allah, the Exalted, alone has this knowledge and He has granted it to mankind in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This truth is obvious when one observes those who act on Islamic teachings by correctly using the blessings they have been granted and those who do not.

Allah, the Exalted, removed these numerous branch problems by addressing the root problem meaning, forbidding unlawful relationships and encouraging marriage, whereby a couple sincerely devote themselves to each other and their children.

By addressing the concept of marriage, divorce, widows and children in the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, has given the key to a successful society. When the members of the family, whether together or divorced, fulfill each other's rights and create a stable and happy home for the children, it causes a positive ripple effect throughout society. Conversely, when a family is unhappy and fail to fulfil each other's rights, then it causes a negative ripple effect which spreads throughout society.

Many thinkers have come and gone which have addressed the issues people and society face but as these solutions target branch issues the benefit of these solutions are minimal. Whereas, Allah, the Exalted, through this method of addressing root issues, which affect an individual and the society, has clarified all things so that people can achieve success in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 89:

"…And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things and as guidance and mercy…"

But as indicated by verse 242, only those who use the intelligence they have been granted correctly will understand the profound wisdom within the verses of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 242:

"Thus does Allāh make clear to you His verses that you might use reason."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 243-245

۞ أَلَمۡ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِينَ خَرَجُواْ مِن دِيَٰرِهِمۡ وَهُمۡ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ ٱلۡمَوۡتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ مُوتُواْ ثُمَّ أَحۡيَٰهُمۡۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَذُو فَضۡلٍ عَلَى ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكۡثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَشۡكُرُونَ



وَقَٰتِلُواْ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٞ ٢٤٤

“Have you not considered those who left their homes in many thousands, fearing death? Allah said to them, "Die"; then He restored them to life. And Allah is the possessor of bounty for the people, but most of the people do not show gratitude.

And fight in the cause of Allah and know that Allah is Hearing and Knowing.

Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned.”

The beginning of verse 243 indicates the importance of avoiding a self-absorbed attitude whereby one only ever thinks about their own life and especially their own problems. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 243:

"*Have you not considered those…"*

The one who behaves in this manner will fail to make use of the lessons found within general history, their own personal history and the condition of people around them. Learning from these things is one of the most powerful ways a person can improve their behaviour and avoid history repeating itself so that they achieve peace of mind. For example, the one who observes the rich and famous misusing the blessings they have been granted and how, as a result they are plagued with stress, mental disorders, substance addiction and suicidal tendencies, even though they experience moments of fun and enjoy the luxuries of this world, will teach the observer not to follow in their footsteps by misusing the blessings they have been granted. Or when a person observes a sick person, it should encourage them to show gratitude for their own good health and to use it correctly before they lose it also. Therefore, Islam regularly encourages muslims to become observant people instead of people which are absorbed in their own affairs that they do not pay attention to anything else. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 10:

"Have they not traveled through the land and seen how was the end of those before them?..."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 243:

"*Have you not considered those who left their homes in many thousands, fearing death?...*"

It is important to note that a person should not be diverted from the important lessons behind this verse so that they waste their energy and time researching irrelevant information, such as the identity of this group of people. If their identity was important and relevant, Allah, the Exalted, would have mentioned it. One must avoid studying topics within religious knowledge which will not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. A good way of judging whether a topic of religious knowledge is relevant or not is by assessing whether that is something Allah, the Exalted, will ask them about on Judgement Day. If they will not be questioned about a particular topic in Islam, such as specific events within Islamic history, then that topic is irrelevant and should be avoided. But if a topic will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of one's neighbour, then this topic must be researched, learned and acted upon to the best of one's potential.

In addition, as Islam was constantly under attack from the non-muslims of Mecca and their associates, such as the hypocrites and the people of the book living in Medina, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were encouraged to fight in order to defend themselves and Islam. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 39:

“Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allāh is competent to give them victory.”

The two major issues in respect to striving in the path of Allah, the Exalted, is the fear of death and losing the resources one has been granted or using them in ways which contradict their desires. Both these issues have therefore repeatedly been addressed in the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 243:

“*Have you not considered those who left their homes in many thousands, fearing death? Allah said to them, "Die"; then He restored them to life…”*

Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that life and death are both within His control and the death of each person has already been decided and cannot be avoided. Chapter 23 Al Mu’minun, verse 80:

“And it is He who gives life and causes death…”

And chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verse 11:

“But never will Allāh delay a soul when its time has come. And Allāh is Aware of what you do.”

As a person’s death has been set and cannot be avoided, then it does not make sense to avoid striving to please Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings, as the behaviour of a person cannot change the time of their death. In reality, death being set for everyone and unknown to them should encourage them more, to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, so that they achieve a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. In other words, as a person cannot escape death, it makes sense to adequately prepare for it before their time runs out. Chapter 63 Al Munafiqun, verses 10-11:

“And spend [in the way of Allāh] from what We have provided you before death approaches one of you and he says, "My Lord, if only You would delay me for a brief term so I would give charity and be of the righteous." But never will Allāh delay a soul when its time has come. And Allāh is Aware of what you do.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 243:

“*Have you not considered those who left their homes in many thousands, fearing death? Allah said to them, "Die"; then He restored them to life…”*

This restoring to life could have occurred in this world in order to teach them the important lesson that life and death are in the control of Allah, the Exalted, therefore, one should not flee from His obedience fearing death. Resurrection in this world has occurred in history. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 72-73:

“And [recall] when you slew a man and disputed over it, but Allāh was to bring out that which you were concealing. So We said, "Strike him [i.e., the slain man] with part of it." Thus does Allāh bring the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you might reason.”

Or this resurrection could be referring to Judgement Day where everyone will be resurrected and held accountable for their deeds. In this case, this indicates fleeing from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, fearing death will not aid one in practically preparing for the Day of Judgement. It does not take a scholar to determine that failing to practically prepare for the Day of Judgement leads to stress, trouble and severe danger. The one who appreciates both points of view and corrects their behaviour so that they avoid fleeing from the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, because of some worldly fear, such as death or poverty, and the one who remains firm on His obedience fearing their accountability on Judgement Day, will show gratitude

to Allah, the Exalted, for the countless blessings He has granted them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 243:

"…And Allāh is the possessor of bounty for the people, but most of the people do not show gratitude."

More specifically, gratitude in one's intention involves acting only to please Allah, the Exalted. The one who acts for other reasons will not gain any reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A positive sign of a good intention is that a person does not desire any gratitude or compensation from people. Gratitude with the tongue involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. And as mentioned earlier, gratitude with one's actions involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

This gratitude will ensure one obtains a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. In addition, remaining obedient to Allah, the Exalted, in this way will ensure peace of mind and success whether one continues to live, dies and when they reach Judgement Day. Therefore, being guided to this outcome is in itself a great blessing from Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 243:

“…And Allāh is the possessor of bounty for the people, but most of the people do not show gratitude.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 52:

“Say, "Do you await for us except one of the two best things [i.e., martyrdom or victory]…"”

After making the reality of life, death and success in both worlds clear, Allah, the Exalted, then encourages the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, to fight in the path of Allah, the Exalted, in order to defend Islam and remove oppression within the Arab society. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 244:

“And fight in the cause of Allah…”

And as Allah, the Exalted, hears and knows all things, He is fully aware of the intention of people for fighting or when they present excuses from refraining for fighting in His cause and He will therefore compensate each person accordingly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 244:

“…and know that Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.”

The command to know these two divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, indicates the importance of learning and acting on Islamic teachings so that one adopts certainty of faith. Certainty of faith encourages one to remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all situations. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This leads to a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who possesses weak faith, due to ignorance of Islamic knowledge, will easily misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as during times of difficulty, and as a result they will fail to obtain peace of mind.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 244:

“…and know that Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.”

In addition, the command to know these divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, indicates the importance of learning and acting on His divine attributes according to one’s potential. For example, as Allah, the Exalted, is All Merciful, people should show mercy to each other so that they receive the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1922. When one fails to learn the divine attributes correctly, then they will believe things about Allah, the Exalted, that are not true and in some cases this belief can become disrespectful and can even lead them to disbelief. For example, if one does not understand the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, correctly, they will be encouraged to adopt a lazy attitude whereby they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves misusing the blessings they have been granted, while believing they will receive the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This is not having hope in Allah, the Exalted, it is merely wishful thinking which has no value in Islam. Hope is always tied to striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then expecting the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. The difference between the two has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. In addition, to believe Allah, the Exalted, will treat the good doer equally to the wrongdoer challenges the fairness and justice of Allah, the Exalted, which is highly disrespectful. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 21:

“Or do those who commit evils think We will make them like those who have believed and done righteous deeds - [make them] equal in their life and their death? Evil is that which they judge.”

Furthermore, an ignorant person may falsely believe Allah, the Exalted, favours certain lineages over others, just like the Jews believe, and as a result they attribute racism to Allah, the Exalted, without realizing it. Therefore, it is vital for a person to learn and act upon the divine attributes of Allah, the Exalted, from the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they adopt the correct belief about Allah, the Exalted, and adopt the correct behaviour which leads to peace of mind in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 244:

“And fight in the cause of Allāh and know that Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.”

In order to correctly understand the meanings of the verses of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, one must place them in their correct context. Meaning, no verse or Hadith can be taken in isolation without observing the context in which it was revealed or recorded in order to justify someone’s actions. In order to correctly understand the context of the verses and Hadiths one must analyze them in the light of the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Only in this way will it become clear what or who a specific verse or Hadith refers to.

In addition, Muslims can only take up arms against external aggressors under the banner of a legitimate ruler and when it is done according to the injunctions found within the Holy Quran and traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Those who fight must constantly fear Allah, the Exalted, in crossing these limits and rules. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

"*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors."*

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 194:

"…*So whoever has assaulted you, then assault him in the same way that he has assaulted you. And fear Allah…"*

One such rule is to resort to war only when one is attacked, as indicated by the main verses under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 190:

"*Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you…"*

Therefore, showing physical aggression against an enemy in a state of peace is forbidden. Another rule is that when the enemy desists from aggression then Muslims must desist also. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 193:

"…But if they cease, then there is to be no aggression [i.e., assault] except against the violators."

If the enemy desires peace it must be granted. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 90:

"…So if they remove themselves from you and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allāh has not made for you a cause [for fighting] against them."

The third rule is that civilians are not to be harmed. This has been indicated by the main verses under discussion as this is transgressing. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, repeatedly forbade women, children, elders, and the sick, as well as monks and hermits to be harmed during war. This has been confirmed in many Hadiths such as the one found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2614, and Musnad Ahmad, number 2728.

The first Caliph of Islam Abu Bakr Siddique, may Allah be pleased him, forbade the killing of children, women and the elderly, in line with the teachings of Islam. He forbade the cutting of fruit bearing trees, damaging property and the killing of cattle. This has been advised in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, number 33121.

The second Caliph of Islam Umar Bin Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, made it clear to the Muslim armies not to harm non-soldiers such as a farmer. This has been advised in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shayba, number 33120.

In case of impending conflict the Muslim nation are commanded to prepare as best as they can. This preparation aims to deter the enemy from attacking, in which case if the enemy wish for peace it must be granted to them. Chapter 8 An Anfal, verses 60-61:

“And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allāh and your enemy…And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also]…”

Permission is granted to fight those who do not honor their treaties with the Muslims. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 12-13:

“And if they break their oaths after their treaty and defame your religion, then combat the leaders of disbelief, for indeed, there are no oaths [sacred] to them; [fight them that] they might cease. Would you not fight against a people who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time?”

Islam has forbade attacking those who respect their treaties. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 7:

“…So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

There is no question of forcing anyone to accept Islam as it is something which must be accepted by one’s heart not only through one’s tongue and actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

“There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion…”

Those who are at peace with the Muslims are to be treated with justice at all times. Chapter 60 Al Mumtahanah, verses 8-9:

“Allāh does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves those who act justly. Allāh only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion…”

War is hateful to Allah, the Exalted, and Muslims must be forced into it while not desiring it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“Battle has been enjoined upon you while it is hateful to you…”

This is further indicated in the following verses as Allah, the Exalted, mentions two of His divine attributes both of which are connected to His mercy and peace, namely, All Forgiving and All Merciful. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 192:

“And if they cease, then indeed, Allāh is Forgiving and Merciful.”

He purposely chose to mention these divine attributes instead of His divine attributes of power and might to indicate that peace and security is what He prefers for mankind.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, even warned Muslims not to desire fighting and instead commanded them to desire safety from Allah, the Exalted. But if they were forced to encounter the enemy then they must remain steadfast. This has been mentioned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2966.

The real intent of these verses is to stress that force should be used only when its use is unavoidable, only to the extent that is absolutely necessary and under the guidance of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

As mentioned earlier, it is vital to assess a verse or a Hadith in its right context in order to understand who, what and where it applies. Unfortunately, many people, intentionally or unintentionally, fail to interpret the verses and Hadiths on fighting in this way. One very famous example is of a verse which is referred to as the sword verse even though the word “sword” is not mentioned in the Holy Quran. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 5:

“And when the inviolable months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush…”

As explained earlier in detail even this statement of war is restricted to specific conditions and concessions of peace. In addition, studying the historical context of this and other related verses clearly prove that it is not a universal principle for fighting non-Muslims. Meaning, the verse refers to a specific group of people, at a specific time and in a specific place.

The surrounding verses of the sword verse clearly indicate on multiple occasions that the polytheists referred to are only those who repeatedly violated their peace treaties with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and engaged in acts of violent aggression against the Muslim community and its allies. For example, the verse immediately before the Sword verse, meaning, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 4, states:

“Excepted are those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists and then they have not been deficient toward you in anything or supported anyone against you; so complete for them their treaty until their term [has ended]. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

This is followed by another command in a related verse, chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 7:

“How can there be for the polytheists a treaty in the sight of Allāh and with His Messenger, except for those with whom you made a treaty at al-Masjid al-Ḥarām? So as long as they are upright toward you, be upright toward them. Indeed, Allāh loves the righteous [who fear Him].”

The crimes of these polytheists whom fighting was commanded against are mentioned in other related verses. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 8-10:

“How [can there be a treaty] while, if they gain dominance over you, they do not observe concerning you any pact of kinship or covenant of protection? They satisfy you with their mouths, but their hearts refuse [compliance], and most of them are defiantly disobedient. They have exchanged the signs of Allāh for a small price and averted [people] from His way. Indeed, it was evil that they were doing. They do not observe toward a believer any pact of kinship or covenant of protection. And it is they who are the transgressors.”

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verses 12-13:

“And if they break their oaths after their treaty and defame your religion, then combat the leaders of disbelief, for indeed, there are no oaths [sacred] to them; [fight them that] they might cease. Would you not fight against a people

who broke their oaths and determined to expel the Messenger, and they had begun [the attack upon] you the first time?..."

Theses specific polytheists continuously broke their agreements and aided others against Islam. They began hostilities against the Muslims, prevented people from accepting Islam, expelled Muslims from Mecca and Masjid Al Haram. At least eight times in the quoted verses their crimes against the Muslims are mentioned.

In chapter 9 Tawbah, verse 12, which was quoted earlier, the goal of fighting the "leaders of disbelief" is so they "cease" from their acts of aggression. These verses, like the rest, indicate the importance of adhering to specific conditions during times of war such as fighting only those who fight them first.

In addition, these polytheists were still offered many warnings and concessions. They were given a four-month period of respite and peace. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 2:

"So travel freely, [O disbelievers], throughout the land [during] four months but know that you cannot cause failure to Allah…"

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 5:

“And when the inviolable [four] months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush…”

This respite was given so that they either accept Islam or peacefully leave the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was commanded to grant protection to any of these polytheists who requested it so that they have the opportunity to listen to the teachings of Islam without any fear or pressure or they could peacefully leave the Arabian Peninsula without fear of being harmed. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 6:

“And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allāh [i.e., the Qur’ān]. Then deliver him to his place of safety. That is because they are a people who do not know.”

The command in the sword verse of fighting and killing these polytheists would only come into effect if they remained in the Arabian Peninsula after the four-month respite without accepting Islam. It is important to note that many of the polytheists took advantage of this respite and accepted Islam. Because of this respite fighting came to an end and no blood was actually

shed on account of the sword verse, as the aim of this verse was to act as a deterrent from further bloodshed meaning, either these polytheists accept Islam or leave the Arabian Peninsula peacefully.

To conclude, the surrounding verses and the blessed life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, place the sword verse in its correct context. Meaning, these verses were specifically revealed in order to put an end to attacks from specific hostile polytheists against the Muslim community. Therefore, they cannot be blankly applied to others after them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 244:

“And fight in the cause of Allāh and know that Allāh is Hearing and Knowing.”

Generally speaking, striving in the path of Allah, the Exalted, is a continuous struggle and involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure one obtains a balanced mental and physical state which leads to peace of mind in both worlds. This struggle may contradict the desires of people but as it leads to peace of mind, they must accept and fulfil it. Therefore, a person must accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake, even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best

for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings. This is because the only One who has the knowledge required to ensure a person achieves a balanced mental and physical state is Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the mental and physical states of humans possessed by society will never be enough to achieve this outcome, despite all the research that has been undertaken, as they cannot solve every issue a person can face within their life nor can their advice cause one to avoid all types of mental and physical stress due to limited knowledge, experience and foresight. Allah, the Exalted, alone has this knowledge and He has granted it to mankind in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This truth is obvious when one observes those who use the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings and those who do not.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

"Who is it that would loan Allāh a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?..."

As mentioned earlier, there are two major things in respect to striving in the path of Allah, the Exalted. The first is fear of death and the second is losing the blessings one has been granted, such as wealth, or using it in a way which contradicts their desires. In verse 245, Allah, the Exalted, explains the importance of understanding that the one who uses the resources they have been granted, such as wealth, in ways pleasing to Him will obtain blessings

and mercy many times greater than the resources they used. The blessings and mercy obtained are greater than the resources one has been granted, as they lead to the ultimate goal of every person which is peace of mind. In reality, every person, irrespective of their faith, desires to achieve peace of mind but searches for it different places. Some search for it in fame, others in wealth, others search for it in authority, some search for it in family, friends or their careers. But everyone has the same ultimate goal in pursuing these things, namely, peace of mind. Islam makes it clear that the blessings and mercy one obtains by dedicating the resources they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, leads to this peace of mind in both worlds. As discussed earlier, as Allah, the Exalted, knows all things, including the mental and physical states of people, He alone knows how a person can achieve peace of mind. Just like a doctor is the best person to advise others on medicines, Allah, the Exalted, is the only One who can correctly advise people on how to achieve peace of mind and body.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

"Who is it that would loan Allāh a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?..."

As Allah, the Exalted, knows the stinginess of people, He words the verse so that it sounds like a business transaction which leads to profit. The one who understands this should feel shy that due to their greed, Allah, the Exalted, the Creator and Owner of all things needs to promise to repay back any resource used for His sake in order to encourage them to use the blessings they have been granted correctly, even though it only benefits

them to do so. This shyness should encourage them to strive harder in using the resources they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings.

Allah, the Exalted, then reminds people that the resources they possess, such as wealth, have been granted by none other than Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

“…And it is Allāh who withholds and grants abundance…”

As Allah, the Exalted, created and granted worldly things to people, He alone is their true Owner. Therefore, it is only fair for people to use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to their Owner, Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, has granted worldly things on a loan to people, they must pay this loan back. The only way to pay this loan back is to use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, as the blessings of Paradise are a gift, people will be free to use them as they desire. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 43:

“…And they will be called, "This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do."”

A person must therefore not confuse the worldly blessings which are a loan with the gifts of Paradise.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

"…And it is Allāh who withholds and grants abundance…"

Generally speaking, the duty of a person is not to stress over what they have been allocated in this world by Allah, the Exalted, as this is something which was decided over fifty thousand years before Allah, the Exalted, created the Heavens and the Earth and cannot be changed. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Instead, a person must use the resources they have been granted, such as their physical strength, in order to obtain their lawful provision in this world and then firmly believe that whatever provision was allocated to them so long ago will reach them and nothing can change this. Understanding this will prevent them from obtaining provision from unlawful sources. In addition, a person must firmly believe that whatever they have been allocated by Allah, the Exalted, is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them, and what He grants to others is best for them. Therefore, they must concentrate on using whatever blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings, so that they obtain peace of mind, instead of worrying about what worldly things they or others have been allocated in this world. Peace of mind lies in using worldly things correctly, according to Islamic teachings, it does not lie in possessing many worldly things. This is obvious when one observes the rich who are often furthest from peace of mind despite their many worldly possessions and the moments of fun they experience.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

“Who is it that would loan Allāh a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allāh who withholds and grants abundance…”

As Allah, the Exalted, alone decides the provision of the creation, each person will only receive worldly things according to what He decides. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6748. Therefore, if one desires to receive worldly blessings which become a source of peace for them in both worlds, then they must use them in the correct way, according to the teachings of Islam, otherwise they will either lose the worldly blessings they have been granted, such as authority, or it will become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun. This is quite evident when one observes those who misuse the blessings they have been granted.

It is therefore up to a person to decide whether they desire to obtain peace of mind in both worlds, which is obtained when they use the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Or a person can choose to misuse the blessings they have been granted, which will only lead to misery, trouble and stress in both worlds, as it will prevent them from obtaining a balanced mental and physical state which is required to obtain peace of mind, even if they experience moments of fun. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Whichever option a person chooses they will be held accountable for it in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

“…and to Him you will be returned.”

Therefore, it makes sense to choose the correct option and path, for the sake of their own mental and physical health.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 246-251

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلْمَلَإِ مِنۢ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰٓ إِذْ قَالُوا۟ لِنَبِىٍّ لَّهُمُ ٱبْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا
نُّقَٰتِلْ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِن كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَٰتِلُوا۟ ۖ
قَالُوا۟ وَمَا لَنَآ أَلَّا نُقَٰتِلَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِن دِيَٰرِنَا وَأَبْنَآئِنَا ۖ فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ
عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا۟ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا ۚ قَالُوٓا۟ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لَهُ
ٱلْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِٱلْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِّنَ ٱلْمَالِ ۚ قَالَ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ
ٱصْطَفَىٰهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُۥ بَسْطَةً فِى ٱلْعِلْمِ وَٱلْجِسْمِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ يُؤْتِى مُلْكَهُۥ مَن
يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ ءَايَةَ مُلْكِهِۦٓ أَن يَأْتِيَكُمُ ٱلتَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن
رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ ءَالُ مُوسَىٰ وَءَالُ هَٰرُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ ۚ إِنَّ فِى
ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَةً لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِٱلْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُم بِنَهَرٍ فَمَن شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّى
وَمَن لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُۥ مِنِّىٓ إِلَّا مَنِ ٱغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةًۢ بِيَدِهِۦ ۚ فَشَرِبُوا۟ مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ
فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُۥ هُوَ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مَعَهُۥ قَالُوا۟ لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا ٱلْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ
وَجُنُودِهِۦ ۚ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلَٰقُوا۟ ٱللَّهِ كَم مِّن فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ
فِئَةً كَثِيرَةًۢ بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ مَعَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿٢٤٩﴾

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا۟ لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِۦ قَالُوا۟ رَبَّنَآ أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ
أَقْدَامَنَا وَٱنصُرْنَا عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾

فَهَزَمُوهُم بِإِذْنِ ٱللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُۥدُ جَالُوتَ وَءَاتَىٰهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُلْكَ وَٱلْحِكْمَةَ
وَعَلَّمَهُۥ مِمَّا يَشَآءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ ٱللَّهِ ٱلنَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لَّفَسَدَتِ
ٱلْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى ٱلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٢٥١﴾

“Have you not considered the assembly of the Children of Israel after [the time of] Moses when they said to a prophet of theirs, "Send to us a king, and we will fight in the way of Allah"? He said, "Would you perhaps refrain from fighting if battle was prescribed for you?" They said, "And why should we not fight in the cause of Allah when we have been driven out from our homes and from our children?" But when battle was prescribed for them, they turned away, except for a few of them. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.

And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, Allah has sent to you Saul as a king." They said, "How can he have kingship over us while we are more

worthy of kingship than him and he has not been given any measure of wealth?" He said, "Indeed, Allah has chosen him over you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. And Allah gives His sovereignty to whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing [in favor] and Knowing.

And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, a sign of his kingship is that the chest will come to you in which is assurance from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron had left, carried by the angels. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers."

And when Saul went forth with the soldiers, he said, "Indeed, Allah will be testing you with a river. So whoever drinks from it is not of me, and whoever does not taste it is indeed of me, excepting one who takes [from it] in the hollow of his hand." But they drank from it, except a [very] few of them. Then when he had crossed it along with those who believed with him, they said, "There is no power for us today against Goliath and his soldiers." But those who were certain that they would meet Allah said, "How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allah. And Allah is with the patient."

And when they went forth to [face] Goliath and his soldiers, they said, "Our Lord, pour upon us patience and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people."

So they defeated them by permission of Allah, and David killed Goliath, and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom [i.e., prophethood] and taught him from that which He willed. And if it were not for Allah checking [some] people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted, but Allah is the possessor of bounty for the worlds."

The beginning of verse 246 indicates the importance of avoiding a self-absorbed attitude whereby one only ever thinks about their own life and especially their own problems. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 243:

"*Have you not considered the…"*

The one who behaves in this manner will fail to make use of the lessons found within general history, their own personal history and the condition of people around them. Learning from these things is one of the most powerful ways a person can improve their behaviour and avoid history repeating itself so that they achieve peace of mind. For example, the one who observes the rich and famous misusing the blessings they have been granted and how, as a result they are plagued with stress, mental disorders, substance addiction and suicidal tendencies, even though they experience moments of fun and enjoy the luxuries of this world, will teach the observer not to follow in their footsteps by misusing the blessings they have been granted and they will be convinced that peace of mind does not lie in possessing many worldly things. Or when a person observes a sick person, it should encourage them to show gratitude for their own good health and to use it correctly before they lose it also. Therefore, Islam regularly encourages muslims to become observant people instead of people which are absorbed in their own affairs that they do not pay attention to anything else. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 10:

"Have they not traveled through the land and seen how was the end of those before them?..."

As the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were being encouraged to defend Islam and themselves from the aggression of the non-muslims of Mecca, Allah, the Exalted, discusses some elements connected to fighting in the main verses under discussion by using an event from the past. This example also served as a criticism of many from the people of the book living in Medina who rejected Islam for the sake of worldly gain despite recognizing the truthfulness of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they had both been discussed in their divine scriptures. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 246:

“*Have you not considered the assembly of the Children of Israel after [the time of] Moses when they said to a prophet of theirs…*”

It is important to note that a person should not be diverted from the important lessons behind this verse so that they waste their energy and time researching irrelevant information, such as the identity of this Holy Prophet, peace be upon him. If his identity was important and relevant to the lessons of this verse, Allah, the Exalted, would have mentioned it. One must avoid studying topics within religious knowledge which will not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. A good way of judging whether a topic of religious knowledge is relevant or not is by assessing whether that is something Allah, the Exalted, will ask them about on Judgement Day. If they will not be questioned about a particular topic in Islam, such as specific events within Islamic history, then that topic is irrelevant and should be avoided. But if a topic will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of one’s neighbour, then this topic must be researched, learned and acted upon to the best of one’s potential.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 246:

“*Have you not considered the assembly of the Children of Israel after [the time of] Moses when they said to a prophet of theirs, "Send to us a king..."*”

The first thing to note is that this group of people were being led be a Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, who was divinely guided and aided yet they desired to have a worldly king. This indicates that they were interested in having a leader who would be more focused on worldly gain, such as wealth and power, then having a leader who would encourage them to prepare adequately for the hereafter. Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of choosing leaders within a community that have the correct mentality. Someone who fears Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability on Judgement Day will always strive hard to fulfil the rights of their people while encouraging them to live in the correct way. This will lead to benefit for everyone in both worlds. Whereas, a worldly person will only ever be interested in gaining wealth and power for themself and as a result they will fail to fulfil the rights of the public. This is quite evident if one observes the politicians of today.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates the importance of not desiring fighting as a person may not fulfill the duty correctly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 246:

"*Have you not considered the assembly of the Children of Israel after [the time of] Moses when they said to a prophet of theirs, "Send to us a king, and we will fight in the way of Allah"? He said, "Would you perhaps refrain from fighting if battle was prescribed for you?" They said, "And why should we not fight in the cause of Allah when we have been driven out from our homes and from our children?" But when battle was prescribed for them, they turned away, except for a few of them…."*

Some of the younger Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, also desired to fight in order to defend Islam and therefore, Allah, the Exalted, explained to them the danger of desiring difficult duties. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 143:

"And you had certainly wished for death [i.e., martyrdom] before you encountered it, and you have [now] seen it [before you] while you were looking on."

Instead, a muslim should desire peace and safety and if they were forced to fight, then they should remain firm in order to please Allah, the Exalted. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2966. Generally speaking, a person should avoid making life unnecessarily harder for themselves and others, especially in worldly matters. For example, the more one strives to earn lawful wealth according to their needs and responsibilities, the less stress they will encounter. Whereas, the one who strives for more than this will only invite stress into their life. This is a reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, that simplicity is a part of faith.

In addition, this warns muslims not to pick and choose what Islamic commands and prohibitions to accept and which ones to ignore according to their desires. The one who behaves in this manner treats Islam like a coat, which they can put on and take off according to their desires. This person only worships they own desires, even if they believe they are obeying and worshipping Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

“Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?...”

The one who behaves in this manner will undoubtedly misuse the blessings they have been granted, even if they occasionally obey Allah, the Exalted. This will prevent them from obtaining a balanced mental and physical state which in turn will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Instead, a muslim must strive to obey Allah, the Exalted, in every situation by using the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Therefore, a person must accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake, even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings. This is because the only One who has the knowledge required to ensure a person achieves a balanced mental and physical state is Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the mental and physical states of humans possessed by society will never be enough to achieve this outcome, despite all the research that has been undertaken, as they cannot solve every issue a person can face within their life nor can their advice cause one to avoid all types of mental and physical stress due to limited knowledge, experience and foresight. Allah, the Exalted, alone has this knowledge and He has granted it to mankind in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This truth is obvious when one observes those who use the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings and those who do not. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 246:

“…But when battle was prescribed for them, they turned away, except for a few of them. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 247:

“And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, Allāh has sent to you Saul as a king."…”

Even though this group from the children of Israel asked their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, to appoint them a king, the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, had to state that it was in fact Allah, the Exalted, who appointed Saul as their king. He in fact restates this again in the same verse, as he knows the lack of respect the children of Israel show to their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This lack of respect has been highlighted throughout the Holy Quran. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 67:

“And [recall] when Moses said to his people, "Indeed, Allāh commands you to slaughter a cow." They said, "Do you take us in ridicule?" He said, "I seek refuge in Allāh from being among the ignorant."”

And chapter 61 As Saf, verse 5:

“And when Moses said to his people, "O my people, why do you harm me while you certainly know that I am the messenger of Allāh to you?"…”

A muslim can behave in a similar way towards the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, when they verbally claim to love and respect him, yet they fail to learn and act on his life and teachings. Claiming to love and respect someone while ignoring their advice and contradicting them is highly disrespectful and is something every muslim will answer for in both worlds. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 63:

“Do not make [your] calling of the Messenger among yourselves as the call of one of you to another. Already Allāh knows those of you who slip away, concealed by others. So let those beware who dissent from his [i.e., the Prophet's] order, lest a calamity strike them or a painful punishment.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 247:

“And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, Allāh has sent to you Saul as a king." They said, "How can he have kingship over us while we are more worthy of kingship than him…””

Their reply revealed their intention behind seeking a worldly king. They were hoping that one of them, the senior members of the children of Israel, would be selected as their king and he would in turn only consider the interests of the other leaders within their society, while neglecting the general public, just like the politicians of today.

It is vital to understand that desiring leadership and excess wealth easily destroys a person’s faith. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, that craving for wealth and status is more destructive to one's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep. This is because the one who desires these things will compromise on their faith to achieve them. They will disobey Allah, the Exalted, while obtaining them and while holding onto them, as leadership and excessive wealth cannot be obtained without disobeying Allah, the Exalted, especially in this day and age. The more one desires these things, the more they will disobey Allah, the Exalted, and wrong others. This is quite evident when one observes history and the great lengths people went to obtaining leadership and wealth, such as killing innocent people. A muslim must instead strive to earn lawful wealth according to their needs and responsibilities and if they happen to be appointed to leadership, use it in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, so that it becomes a source of peace for them and others in both worlds. Otherwise, as proven by history, misusing wealth and leadership will only leader to stress, trouble and difficulties for its bearer in both worlds, even if this is not obvious to them or others.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 247:

“And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, Allāh has sent to you Saul as a king." They said, "How can he have kingship over us while we are more worthy of kingship than him and he has not been given any measure of wealth?"…”

Sadly, many muslims have adopted the same attitude whereby they judge the status of people according to worldly standards, such as wealth. Islam judges the status of people according to a single factor, namely, piety. Meaning, the more one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, the higher their status is. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…”

But it is important to note that as a person’s intention is hidden, they should not judge themselves or others as superior based on their outward actions. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 32:

“…So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him.”

Failing to behave in the correct manner only leads to discrimination of people, such as racism. Therefore, a muslim must ignore all other worldly standards, such as gender, ethnicity or social status, and instead strive to achieve superiority through piety and encourage others to do the same. This has been indicated in the main verses under discussion, as the root of piety is knowledge. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 28:

"...Only those fear Allāh, from among His servants, who have knowledge..."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 247:

“…He said, "Indeed, Allāh has chosen him over you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature…””

The stature could be referring to his good character, which is the outward manifestation of piety. Good character is achieved when one learns and adopts the good characteristics discussed in Islamic knowledge, such as generosity, patience and gratitude, and abandons the negative characteristics discussed within Islamic knowledge, such as greed, pride and insincerity.

The one who adopts piety, and through it good character, will be blessed by Allah, the Exalted, with superiority in both worlds, as He knows best that they deserve it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 247:

"…And Allāh gives His sovereignty to whom He wills. And Allāh is all-Encompassing [in favor] and Knowing."

In addition, this reminds muslims to avoid envying other people who have been granted specific worldly blessings. Envy is a major sin which must be avoided at all costs. It is a major sin as the envier directly challenges the choice of Allah, the Exalted. They behave as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake by granting a particular blessing to someone else instead of them. The one who allows their envy to strive verbally and physically against the one they envy will only destroy their own good deeds. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4210. Lawful envy is when one wishes to obtain a similar blessing to someone else without the latter losing what they have been granted. Even though this type is lawful, yet it is only praiseworthy in religious matters and blameworthy in worldly matters. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised two cases of lawful and praiseworthy envy in a Hadith found in

Sahih Muslim, number 1896. One can envy the person who uses their knowledge correctly and teaches others it. The other person one can envy is the one who obtains lawful wealth and spends it in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted.

One must avoid envy by understanding that it is a major sin which challenges the distribution choice of Allah, the Exalted. They must understand that Allah, the Exalted, grants each person what is best for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Therefore, instead of envying others they must concentrate on using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will lead to further blessings and peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, envying others will only cause one to forget obeying Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

The muslim who is envied must remain patient against the verbal and physical actions of their envier and only defend themselves within the bounds of Islam. Patience involves avoiding complaining through one's speech and actions and maintaining one's sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This is how one seeks refuge with Allah, the Exalted, from their envier. Chapter 113 Al Falaq, verses 1 and 5:

“Say, "I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak…And from the evil of an envier when he envies."”

Allah, the Exalted, will then protect them from the negative effects of their envier, even if this is not obvious to them, as Allah, the Exalted, acts according to His infinite knowledge and wisdom and not according to the very limited thinking of people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 247:

“…And Allāh gives His sovereignty to whom He wills. And Allāh is all-Encompassing [in favor] and Knowing.”

This also warns those who are granted leadership that as Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of all things, He will hold them accountable in both worlds if they choose to misuse the leadership they have been granted. Therefore, one must strive to ensure they use every blessing they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. If they choose to misuse them, then they will become a source of stress and misery for them in both worlds. This is quite evident if one

observes those who have misused the blessings they were granted, such as leadership.

Even though their Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, did not need to prove to his people that the right man was appointed as their king, as they should have obeyed him without question, yet Allah, the Exalted, granted them a sign in order to convince them and strengthen their pledge to sincerely obey Him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 248:

“And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, a sign of his kingship is that the chest will come to you in which is assurance from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron had left, carried by the angels. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers."”

Allah, the Exalted, has granted many miracles to all the different nations but the greatest timeless miracle was granted to mankind in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, a muslim must not seek entertaining stories about miracles and instead seek to strengthen their faith, which was the aim of the miracles granted by Allah, the Exalted. This is only achieved when one learns and studies Islamic knowledge and appreciates the clear proofs discussed therein. As indicated at the end of verse 248, this will aid them in adopting real and strong belief. Strong faith ensures one remains firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in every situation. This involves using the blessings one has been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings, so that they achieve a balanced mental and physical state. This in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who adopts weak faith, due to ignorance of Islamic knowledge, will not be able to maintain their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in every situation, such as times of difficulty, and as a result they will misuse the blessings they have been granted, which in turn prevents them from achieving peace of mind.

Therefore, a person must avoid searching for entertaining and miraculous stories and instead seek the aim of all miracles which is to obtain strong faith through learning and acting on the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who achieves strong faith in this way, will not need to study, listen to or even witness miraculous events in order to make their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, firmer. This was the attitude of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who despite witnessing miraculous events shown on the hands of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, yet sought strong faith learning and acting on Islamic knowledge.

In addition, any miracle granted to the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were limited by time. Only the people who witnessed it experienced strengthening of their faith. Whereas, those who hear the stories about them

are only amazed by them while it does not strengthen their faith nor increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, are timeless miracles which can be witnessed every day and are therefore more likely to strengthen the faith of a person so that they increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, when one learns and acts on it with an open mind.

The expressions in the Holy Quran are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a straight forward way. Its words and verses are extremely eloquent and no other book can surpass it. The Holy Quran mentions the history of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commands every good and forbids every evil. Those which affect an individual and those which affect the entire society, so that justice, security and peace spreads throughout every home and community. The Holy Quran avoids exaggerations, lies or any falsehood, unlike poetry, stories and fables. All the verses are beneficial and can be applied practically to one's life. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran, different important lessons are highlighted. Unlike all other books, the Holy Quran does not bore a person when it is repeatedly studied. The Holy Quran provides promises and warnings and supports them with undeniable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses something which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides a simple and practical way of implementing it into one's life. It encourages people to fulfil the purpose of their creation, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, thereby ensuring they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. It makes the straight path obvious and appealing to the one who desires peace of mind and real success in both worlds. The knowledge of the Holy Quran is timeless as it can be applied to every society and age. It is a cure for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and

applied correctly. It provides the solution for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever face. One only needs to observe history and how the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly benefited from its all-encompassing and timeless teachings. Centuries have passed yet not a single letter has been changed in the Holy Quran, as Allah, the Exalted, promised to preserve it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

“Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian.”

Allah, the Exalted, discussed the root problems found within a community and detailed the practical remedy for all of them. By correcting root problems, the countless branch problems which stem from them would automatically be corrected. This is how the Holy Quran addressed all the things a person and society need to succeed in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 89:

“…And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things…”

This is the greatest timeless miracle Allah, the Exalted, bestowed upon His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But only those who seek and act on the truth will benefit from it whereas those who seek their desires and cherry pick from it will only encounter loss in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

“And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 248:

“And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, a sign of his kingship is that the chest will come to you in which is assurance from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron had left, carried by the angels. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers."”

Generally speaking, muslims are often good at respecting sacred items, places and days yet often overlook the other things which Allah, the Exalted, has made sacred. For example, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, once declared in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 67, that the blood, property and honor of a muslim are sacred in Islam. This Hadith is best fulfilled when one treats others and their properties in a way they themself wish to be treated by other people. In fact, respecting the sacredness of muslims is more important than even the sacredness of the House of Allah, the Exalted, the Kaaba, according to a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2032. Therefore, muslims must honor and respect all the things which Allah, the Exalted, has made sacred instead of picking and choosing according to their desires, as He will hold them accountable for their attitude and behaviour.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 248:

“And their prophet said to them, "Indeed, a sign of his kingship is that the chest will come to you in which is assurance from your Lord and a remnant of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron had left, carried by the angels. Indeed in that is a sign for you, if you are believers."”

As discussed earlier, it is important not to waste one’s energy and time in researching irrelevant topics of religious knowledge, such as what exactly was inside this chest. If this was important Allah, the Exalted, would have discussed it. A person must strive to research and study those topics which will be questioned about on Judgement Day so that their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, increases, and they must avoid all other types of religious knowledge.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates a general principle through a specific example. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 249:

“And when Saul went forth with the soldiers, he said, "Indeed, Allāh will be testing you with a river. So whoever drinks from it is not of me, and whoever

does not taste it is indeed of me, excepting one who takes [from it] in the hollow of his hand." But they drank from it, except a [very] few of them…"

The purpose of this world is to test mankind. This test involves whether or not one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in divine teachings. Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 2:

"[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is better in deed…"

Acting in the right way often contradicts a person's desires, which makes the test of life a real test, such as the test mentioned in verse 249. In cases like this a person must strive to adhere to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, for their own sake. As discussed earlier, as Allah, the Exalted, alone knows all things, such as the mental and physical state of people, He alone can provide the code of conduct mankind needs to follow in order to achieve a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Therefore, His advice, commands and prohibitions must be followed, just like the dietary advice and treatment plan of a doctor must be followed if one desires to achieve peace of mind and body. But just like a patient who ignores the advice of their doctor will obtain poor mental and physical health, so will the person who ignores Islamic teachings and thereby misuses the blessings they have been granted, even if they experience moments of fun and entertainment. This truth is obvious when one observes those who use the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings and those who do not. In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the

spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains it and who does not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And it is clear that Allah, the Exalted, will only give peace of mind to those who use the blessings He has granted them correctly.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 249:

“And when Saul went forth with the soldiers, he said, "Indeed, Allāh will be testing you with a river. So whoever drinks from it is not of me, and whoever does not taste it is indeed of me, excepting one who takes [from it] in the hollow of his hand." But they drank from it, except a [very] few of them…”

In addition, this also indicates the importance of sincerely and practically following in the footsteps of one’s leader, as appointed by Allah, the Exalted. In this age and till the end of time, this leader is the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As discussed earlier, it is strange how muslims claim to love and respect the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and wish to join him in the hereafter, yet refuse to learn and act on his life and teachings. The truth is that the one who takes a

path other than his does not respect or love him nor will they end up with him in the hereafter. This is why the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were so strict in practically following in his footsteps as they loved and respected him and desired to end up with him in the hereafter. A person should not be fooled by the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that one will end up with those they love in the hereafter. Real love is shown in actions, not words. This is obvious when one observes the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, and how they proved their love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by practically following him. In addition, even the other nations claim to love their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, but it is obvious they will not join them in the hereafter as they did not practically follow them.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 249:

“…Then when he had crossed it along with those who believed with him, they said, "There is no power for us today against Goliath and his soldiers." But those who were certain that they would meet Allāh said, "How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allāh…””

This indicates the importance of certainty of faith. As discussed earlier, those who possess certainty of faith will remain firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in every situation. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in Islamic teachings. Certainty of faith is only obtained when one learns and acts on the clear proofs which support the truthfulness of Islam and the importance of obeying Allah, the Exalted, which are discussed within the Holy Quran and the

traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These teachings make it clear that the one who obeys Allah, the Exalted, will obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, as He alone can provide the code of conduct which leads to this outcome because of His infinite knowledge of the mental and physical states of people and all other things. Just like a doctor possesses knowledge of good health, Allah, the Exalted, alone possesses the knowledge of how a person must act in all aspects of their life in order to achieve peace of mind and body in both worlds. Whereas, as indicated by verse 249, those who possess weak faith will fail to maintain their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, in all occasions, especially times of difficulty.

In addition, certainty of faith allows one to always remember and practically prepare for their meeting with Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day, and their inevitable accountability. This will further encourage one to remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, so that they achieve success in the hereafter.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 249:

"…But those who were certain that they would meet Allāh said, "How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allāh…""

Certainty of faith also encourages one to understand the outcome of all things is decided by Allah, the Exalted, alone, even if this is not obvious to people. And He has guaranteed a successful outcome for those who remain firm on His obedience. Chapter 65 At Talaq, verse 2:

"…And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out"

But it is important to note that the way out of difficulties granted by Allah, the Exalted, for those who sincerely obey Him, is not according to one's desires. The way out granted to people is according to His timetable, infinite wisdom and knowledge, which will always be according to the best interest of those involved, even if this is not obvious to them.

An important aspect of maintaining obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which is achieved through certainty of faith, is patience. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 249:

"…But those who were certain that they would meet Allāh said, "How many a small company has overcome a large company by permission of Allāh. And Allāh is with the patient." And when they went forth to [face] Goliath and his soldiers, they said, "Our Lord, pour upon us patience and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people.""

Patience is when one avoids complaining about their difficulty through their actions or speech and maintains their sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, throughout their ordeal. This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The root of becoming patient is learning and acting on Islamic knowledge. The more one learns and acts on Islamic knowledge, the more they will understand that everything which Allah, the Exalted, chooses is best for everyone involved, even if this is not obvious to them, as the difficulties they face have wisdoms behind them which are hidden from them. For example, there are many such events discussed within Islamic teachings, such as the story of the Holy Prophet Yusuf, peace be upon him, who was separated from his parents at a young age by his brothers, abandoned in a dark and deep well, sold as a child slave and wrongfully thrown into prison. But each of these events allowed him to learn certain lessons which prepared him for saving the population of Egypt from a huge famine. If he did not endure the difficulties he faced he would not have been in a position to save millions of lives. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Believing in these wisdoms and therefore, maintaining one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, is therefore a part of one's faith. It is easy to believe in Allah, the Exalted, and praise Him during times of ease but the real test is when one faces difficulties and still obeys and praises Him.

Studying Islamic teachings also helps one to compare their difficulties to other people, who were more beloved to Allah, the Exalted, and endured greater difficulties. This comparison helps one to belittle their own difficulty which in turn aids them in remaining patient. This can also be achieved when one observes other people within their time period who are facing greater difficulties than them.

Islamic teachings also allows one to understand the importance of destiny and how every event they will face in their life, whether times of ease or difficulties, is inevitable. Complaining about something inevitable and inescapable will not result in any good. A person will only lose out on the countless reward they could obtain by remaining patient on the inescapable difficulty they are destined to face. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"…the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

A person therefore has a choice between facing an inescapable event with patience and gain an uncountable reward or facing an inescapable event with impatience and lose the reward they should have obtained. Either way they will face the inescapable event, so it makes sense to gain benefit from it in both worlds. Chapter 57 Al Hadid, verses 22-23:

“No disaster strikes upon the earth or among yourselves except that it is in a register before We bring it into being - indeed that, for Allāh, is easy. In order that you not despair over what has eluded you…”

Studying Islamic teachings also causes one to understand that the things they desire in this world are not necessarily best for them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Each person has many examples within their life of this truth. There are plenty of things a person desires believing it is best for them, only for those things to become a source of stress for them. And there are plenty of things a person dislikes believing it is bad for them, only for those things to become a source of goodness for them. The one who understands this will be less impatient when dealing with situations which contradict their desires, as they understand facing the situation is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them.

In addition, just like gold is purified through heat, similarly, people obtain mental strength through facing difficulties. Those who are accustomed to an easy life, often experience mental breakdowns when facing standard and even small difficulties, such as marriage problems. Through tests, Allah, the

Exalted, toughens the mental state of a muslim so that they face future difficulties with ease.

As taught by Islam, patience is required in all situations, even times of ease. In times of ease, a person must adopt patience in order to prevent themself from misusing the blessing they have been granted, such as good health or a rise in their salary.

There are many more wisdoms behind facing difficulties in this world which have been discussed within Islamic teachings. Therefore, it is vital for muslims to study, learn and act on them so that they adopt patience in every situation so that they obtain a countless reward in both worlds. A person must remain patient through every situation, just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, despite the fact they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

Patience does not mean a person becomes inactive. An aspect of patience is dealing with the situation and attempting to correct it according to the teachings of Islam. For example, a wife who is being abused by her husband should take steps to protect herself and her children, such as separating from her husband. Behaving in this manner does not contradict patience while becoming inactive has nothing to do with patience or Islam. Similarly, showing emotions, such as crying, does not contradict patience in anyway as the Holy Prophet Yaqoob, peace be upon him, cried so much over his grief that he became blind and yet he was never criticised by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 84:

“And he turned away from them and said, "Oh, my sorrow over Joseph," and his eyes became white from grief, for he was [of that] a suppressor.”

There are many examples when the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, wept over a sad situation, such as the death of his son, Ibrahim, may Allah be pleased with him. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 3126. Showing disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, through one’s speech and actions contradicts patience, anything other than this is acceptable and part of human nature, such as crying and feel sad.

It is important to note that patience must be shown from the onset of a difficulty until one leaves this world. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1302. Showing patience after some time has passed is not real patience, it is merely acceptance which naturally occurs with everyone. A muslim must maintain patience from the onset of a difficulty by controlling their speech and actions so that they do not show signs of impatience and maintain this attitude until they depart from this world, as one can easily lose the reward of patience by showing impatience down the line.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 250:

“And when they went forth to [face] Goliath and his soldiers, they said, "Our Lord, pour upon us patience and plant firmly our feet and give us victory over the disbelieving people."”

This verse clearly indicates that victory comes with remaining patient and firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139:

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”

If muslims are not in a position of superiority within the world today, like the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, were, it is because the condition of true belief has not been met. Muslims must therefore strive to adopt true belief in Allah, the Exalted, which involves correcting their intentions, speech and actions, according to Islamic teachings, so that they remain firm on His obedience in every situation. This will ensure one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings. This in turn leads to superiority and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 55:

“Allāh has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He

will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 251:

"So they defeated them by permission of Allāh, and David killed Goliath…"

The victory guaranteed to the muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, will be according to the timetable, infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, at times, this victory may be delayed or not obvious to muslims, which in itself is another test which muslims must pass by remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 251:

"So they defeated them by permission of Allāh, and David killed Goliath, and Allāh gave him the kingship and wisdom and taught him from that which He willed. …"

This indicates that reward and blessings in both worlds, such as beneficial knowledge, is only gained when one strives in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Just like a person achieves success in the material world through struggle and sacrifice, similarly, a person can only achieve spiritual success, which leads to peace of mind in both worlds, when they strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, just like the Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him, did. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

But it is important to note that if one desires to benefit from the success Allah, the Exalted, grants them, then they must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Dawud, peace be upon him, and use their worldly success, such as leadership, correctly, according to Islamic teachings. Otherwise, the very worldly blessings they were granted will become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them in both worlds. This is obvious when one observes those who misused the blessings they were granted, such as leadership, and is indicated in the final part of verse 251. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 251:

"…And if it were not for Allāh checking [some] people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted, but Allāh is the possessor of bounty for the worlds."

When people misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as authority, they will cause corruption to spread in the land and as a result those who obey Allah, the Exalted, must do their part in removing this corruption from the land by remaining firm on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. They must use the resources they have been granted, such as social influence and wealth, correctly, so that they strive against corruption. In addition, this verse warns people not to misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as authority, otherwise these worldly blessings will be removed from them, sooner or later. But as mentioned earlier, a person must not be fooled into believing this will not occur at all just because it does not occur immediately and according to the desires of people. A punishment which is delayed is not the same as no punishment. One must therefore make good use of the respite granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, to sincerely repent and correct their intentions, speech and actions so that they benefit themselves and others in both worlds. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 45:

"And I will give them time. Indeed, My plan is firm."

Generally speaking, sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 251:

"…And if it were not for Allāh checking [some] people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted, but Allāh is the possessor of bounty for the worlds."

This also teaches muslims the importance of fulfilling their duty of gently command good and forbidding evil according to the teachings of Islam. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

"You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allāh…"

The first thing to note is that one must adopt the right character and possess the right knowledge before they command good and forbid evil otherwise they will only push people further away from obeying Allah, the Exalted. In addition, a person must not ignore this important duty as the only thing required for corruption to spread within society is for good people to do nothing. Just like a rotten apple will infect other good apples, so will the bad behaviour of people affect the wider society. This occurs when evil becomes normalized within society and then as a result the wider society begins to indulge in the same sins and corruption. This is quite evident when one observes the history of any society that failed to command good and forbid evil. Even if it becomes too difficult to advise the wider society, such as fearing the harm of others, a muslim must continue commanding good and forbidding evil to their dependents, as this is a duty on them according to the

Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 2928. Only when one commands good and forbids evil correctly will they be protected from the negative effects of society and pardoned on the Day of Judgment. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 164:

"And when a community among them said, "Why do you advise [or warn] a people whom Allāh is [about] to destroy or to punish with a severe punishment?" they [the advisors] said, "To be absolved before your Lord and perhaps they may fear Him.""

But if they only care about themself and ignore the actions of others, it is feared that the negative effects of others may well lead to their eventual misguidance. This is supported by a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2686. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, warned that failing to fulfill the important duty of commanding good and forbidding evil can be understood with the example of a boat with two levels full of people. Those on the lower deck decided to drill a hole in the lower deck so that they could access water directly without disturbing the people of the upper deck. But if the people on the upper deck failed to stop them, then they would all drown.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 252-254

تِلْكَ ءَايَٰتُ ٱللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِٱلْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢٥٢﴾

۞ تِلْكَ ٱلرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُم مَّن كَلَّمَ ٱللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَٰتٍ
وَءَاتَيْنَا عِيسَى ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَأَيَّدْنَٰهُ بِرُوحِ ٱلْقُدُسِ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مَا ٱقْتَتَلَ
ٱلَّذِينَ مِنۢ بَعْدِهِم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَتْهُمُ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتُ وَلَٰكِنِ ٱخْتَلَفُوا۟ فَمِنْهُم مَّنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُم
مَّن كَفَرَ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ مَا ٱقْتَتَلُوا۟ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٢٥٣﴾

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَنفِقُوا۟ مِمَّا رَزَقْنَٰكُم مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِىَ يَوْمٌ لَّا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا
شَفَٰعَةٌ وَٱلْكَٰفِرُونَ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ﴿٢٥٤﴾

“These are the verses of Allah which We recite with purpose, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], in truth. And indeed, you are from among the messengers.

Those messengers - some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom Allah spoke, and He raised some of them in degrees. And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the Pure Spirit [Gabriel]. If Allah had willed, those [generations] succeeding them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. And if Allah had willed, they would not have fought each other, but Allah does what He intends.

O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you before there comes a Day in which there is no exchange [i.e., ransom] and no friendship and no intercession. And the disbelievers - they are the wrongdoers."

The main purpose of the verses of Allah, the Exalted, is so that humanity understands and strives to fulfil the purpose of life on this Earth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 252:

"These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], with purpose…"

And chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 2:

"[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is better in deed…"

This test involves whether or not one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who passes this test will achieve peace of mind in both worlds, as they will achieve a balanced mental and physical state by placing everyone and everything within their life in the correct place. Whereas, the one who fails this test by misusing the blessings they have been granted will not obtain a balanced and mental state and as a result, they will not obtain peace of mind in either this world or the next. It is important to understand that as Allah, the Exalted, has knowledge of all things, including the mental and physical states of people, He alone can grant mankind a code of conduct which leads to a balanced mental and physical state. On the other hand, as

the knowledge of people are extremely limited and due to a lack of foresight, any man-made code of conduct will not lead to peace of mind. Just like a doctor has some knowledge about medicines, only Allah, the Exalted, can provide the best advice in every aspect of a person's life so that they achieve peace of mind. Therefore, people must accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake, just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Even though, in most cases, patients do not understand the science behind the medicines they are prescribed and therefore blindly trust their doctor, Allah, the Exalted, invites people to reflect on the teachings of Islam so that they can appreciate its positive effects on their lives. He does not expect people to blindly trust the teachings of Islam and instead He wants them to recognize its truthfulness from its clear proofs. But this requires a person to adopt an unbiased and open mind when approaching the teachings of Islam. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

"Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….""

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains it and who does not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

"And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep."

And it is clear that Allah, the Exalted, will only give peace of mind to those who use the blessings He has granted them correctly.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 252:

“These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], with purpose…”

In addition, it is clear that one will not achieve the purpose of the Holy Quran to guide them towards peace of mind in both worlds, if they fail to fulfil the different aspects of the Holy Quran. The first is to recite it regularly and correctly, the second is to strive to understand its teachings and the last aspect is acting on its teachings, so that one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly. Sadly, failing to fulfil the different aspects of the Holy Quran is a major reason why muslims, who fulfil the minimal obligatory duties, do not achieve peace of mind, as they fail to use the blessings they have been granted correctly. It is therefore vital for people to understand and act on the Holy Quran and teach the next generation to do the same and avoid remaining on the first aspect, whereby they recite the Holy Quran in a language they do not understand.

Allah, the Exalted, then comforts the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and at the same time criticizes the non-muslims of Mecca and the scholars from the people of the book living in Medina for the

rejection of his Prophethood, even though they were both aware of the truth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 252:

"…And indeed, you are from among the messengers."

The non-muslims of Mecca knew the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for 40 years prior to him announcing Prophethood and fully believed he was nothing but trustworthy and honest. They were masters of the Arabic language and full well knew the Holy Quran did not come from any creature. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

"…for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"

And the scholars from the people of the book recognized the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they both had been described in their divine scriptures. In addition, their scholars recognized the Holy Quran as they were familiar with its Author, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

“Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…”

In addition, the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which both the people of the book and the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood.

Even though the truth was clear to both the non-muslims of Mecca and the people of the book yet they persisted on harming and opposing the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them. All because they did not want to give up their fabricated lifestyle and code of conduct which allowed them to fulfil their worldly desires by misusing the blessings they had been granted by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 87:

“…But is it [not] that every time a messenger came to you, [O Children of Israel], with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant? And a party [of messengers] you denied and another party you killed.”

Muslims must therefore avoid following in their footsteps practically even if they have accepted the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, verbally. This can occur when one fails to learn and act on his life and teachings. This will only cause them to adopt a path other than his. A path of misguidance which only leads to stress, trouble and difficulties in both worlds, as they will be encouraged to misuse the blessings they have been granted, even if they experience moments of fun. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, failing to practically follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, will prevent one from joining him in the hereafter also. It is logical to understand that if one takes a path in life other than his, they will not unite with him at the same destination. A person must not be fooled by the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 3688, which advises that a person will end up in the hereafter with those they love. Love is shown through actions, not words. This has been demonstrated by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, who proved their love and respect for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, with actions. In addition, even the previous nations claim to loving their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, but they will not unite with them in the hereafter as they failed to follow in their footsteps. Therefore, one must practically follow the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by adopting his character and behaviour if they desire peace of mind and success in both worlds and to unite with him in the hereafter. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins…”

Even though Allah, the Exalted, favoured some Holy Prophets over others, peace be upon them, yet their remain united on their mission of spreading the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, instead of disuniting out of envy for one another. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 253:

“Those messengers - some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom Allāh spoke, and He raised some of them in degrees. And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the Pure Spirit [i.e., Jibraeel]…”

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, adopted the same attitude and as a result they became a powerful united force. Sadly, many muslims have failed to adopt this attitude and instead, out of envy for one another and the desire for leadership, they split into factions which caused the muslim nation to weaken. Chapter 23 Al Mu’minun, verse 53:

“But they [i.e., the people] divided their religion among them into portions [i.e., sects] - each faction, in what it has, rejoicing.”

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 213:

“Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allāh sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over it [i.e., the Scripture] except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves…”

General speaking, envy is a major sin as it directly challenges the distribution of blessings which was chosen by Allah, the Exalted. An envious person acts as if Allah, the Exalted, made a mistake granting a specific blessing to someone else instead of giving it to them. An envious person must never let their envy control them so that they strive to remove the blessing from the other person nor should it prevent them from fulfilling their rights, according to the teachings of Islam. Instead, the envious person must understand that Allah, the Exalted, grants each person what is best for them. Therefore, they must concentrate on using the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings, so that they obtain a balanced mental and physical state. This in turn, will lead to peace of mind in both worlds. Whereas, acting on their envy will only prevent them from achieving peace of mind.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 253:

“Those messengers - some of them We caused to exceed others. Among them were those to whom Allāh spoke, and He raised some of them in degrees…”

These verses also indicate the superiority of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, over all the rest of the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. This has been confirmed in many other places also. For example, during the Heavenly Journey a white beast called Al Buraq was

brought to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, to ride on. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and the Angel Jibraeel, peace be upon him, then set off. Eventually they reached Masjid Al Aqsa where all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were assembled. The Angel Jibraeel, peace be upon him, brought the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, forward to lead them all in prayer. This has been discussed in a Hadith found in Sunan An Nasai, number 451.

Just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has been given superiority over the other Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, similarly his nation has been granted superiority over all the other nations. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 110:

"You are the best nation produced [for the benefit] of mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong…"

Therefore, the muslim nation must follow in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, by fulfilling their role as the best nation produced for the benefit of mankind. This is only achieved when they represent Islam correctly to the outside world. This is achieved when they learn and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Sadly, as many muslims fail to learn and act on Islamic teachings they misrepresent Islam to the outside world. This causes non-muslims and other muslims who possess weak faith to turn away from Islam. Just like the ambassador of a king would be punished for misrepresenting the king, so will the muslim who

misrepresents Islam. Therefore, all muslims must fulfil their role as the ambassadors of Islam, as this duty is a responsibility on every person who accepts Islam as their faith.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 253:

“…And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the Pure Spirit [i.e., Jibraeel]…”

Generally speaking, the reasons for the spread of the false beliefs regarding the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, included his miraculous birth, the miracles which he performed and his ascension to the Heavens while alive. The Holy Quran confirms the miraculous birth of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and clearly describes his fatherless birth as a sign of the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 47:

“She [Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her] said, "My Lord, how will I have a child when no man has touched me?" [The angel] said, "Such is Allāh; He creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says to it, 'Be,' and it is.”

Allah, the Exalted, created the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, without a father, just like He created the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, without a father or mother. This reality does not mean they are divine. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 59:

“Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created him from dust; then He said to him, "Be," and he was.”

It is strange that the Christians believe that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, is the son of Allah, the Exalted, as he was born without a father. But they do not believe the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, to be the son of Allah, the Exalted, even though he was born without a father or mother. According to their mentality, the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, has more of a right of being called the son of Allah, the Exalted, than the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, yet they do not claim this. It is strange how they apply logic and common sense in the case of the Holy Prophet Adam, peace be upon him, yet do not apply logic or common sense in the case of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him.

The miracles of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, have been verified by the Holy Quran. It however makes it clear that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, performed these miracles with the will, permission and command of Allah, the Exalted. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he would not need the will or permission of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 49:

“And [make the Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him] a messenger to the Children of Israel, [who will say], 'Indeed I have come to you with a sign from your Lord in that I design for you from clay [that which is] like the form of a bird, then I breathe into it and it becomes a bird by permission of Allāh. And I cure the blind [from birth] and the leper, and I give life to the dead - by permission of Allāh. And I inform you of what you eat and what you store in your houses…”

The ascension of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, to the Heavens while alive further indicates the power of Allah, the Exalted, as He took the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, on this journey. If the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, was divine he could have undertaken this journey with his own innate power. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 55:

“[Mention] when Allāh said, "O Jesus, indeed I will take you and raise you to Myself and purify [i.e., free] you from those who disbelieve…””

The Holy Quran tells the Christians that the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, contrary to their belief, was not crucified. The one whose image was seen on the cross was not the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, but someone who was made to look like him. Allah, the Exalted, had already raised the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, towards the Heavens by this time. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verses 156-158:

“And for their disbelief and their saying against Mary a great slander. And [for] their saying, "Indeed, we have killed the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, the messenger of Allāh." And they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him; but [another] was made to resemble him to them…Rather, Allāh raised him to Himself.”

The incorrect Christian belief of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, being crucified meaning, killed, is strange in itself as a real divine being is far beyond experiencing death. If an entity can die, it cannot be divine. So in reality, their incorrect belief regarding his death by crucifixion negates their incorrect belief of his divinity by itself.

A divine being by nature is something which is self-sustaining meaning, they do not need someone else to sustain them. If a being is sustained by another then they cannot be divine. Both the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, and his mother, Maryam, may Allah be pleased with her, were not divine beings as they required nourishment from Allah, the Exalted, meaning, they were not self-sustaining beings. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 75:

“The Messiah, son of Mary, was not but a messenger; [other] messengers have passed on before him. And his mother was a supporter of truth. They both used to eat food. Look how We make clear to them the signs; then look how they are deluded.”

In addition, no one can claim that as the Angels do not eat they can be considered Gods. In reality, they are also sustained by Allah, the Exalted, in a different way so they too are not self-sustaining. The fact that they have been created and will experience death, just like the rest of creation, is enough to negate divinity.

A biological child will always share some characteristics with their parent. But in the case of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, he shares no qualities with Allah, the Exalted. In fact, all his characteristics are shared with other humans. He was created, he was sustained by food and water, he will die and be resurrected, just like all other humans. His characteristics are enough to negate divinity.

The Romans who adopted Christianity introduced the concept of the Holy Prophet Eesa, peace be upon him, being divine into their faith, concepts which they carried over from their former faith, paganism. They took a noble and blessed Holy Prophet, peace be upon him, and placed him with fables and myths, such as Zeus, Hercules and Oden. Only a little bit of common sense is required to understand that a being which is created, sustained by someone else and can die can never be divine, as these things contradict the quality of a divine being.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 253:

"…If Allāh had willed, those [generations] succeeding them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved…"

As discussed earlier, due to envy and desire for leadership, the previous nations failed to remain united on their divine teachings and instead split into many factions. They intentionally misinterpreted and edited their divine teachings in order to achieve this goal. Sadly, many scholars within Islam have done the same and as a result the muslims have become divided into many factions also. This allowed these scholars to become gatekeepers between Allah, the Exalted, and the general public. As a result, the general public became convinced that the only way to the closeness of Allah, the Exalted, is by pleasing these gatekeepers through gifts and blind obedience. A muslim must avoid behaving in this manner whereby they intentionally misinterpret divine teachings for the sake of leadership and wealth. This will only destroy their good actions and as a result they will not achieve peace of mind and success in either this world or the next, even if this is not obvious to them. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, that the one who seeks Islamic knowledge for the sake of gaining attention will go to Hell. Secondly, a muslim must avoid joining these factions and instead search for a sincere teacher in order to learn, understand and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Even though one must respect their teacher, none the less, their loyalty must only be to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhamad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, they must adopt the attitude and behaviour advocated by Islamic teachings, even if it contradicts the attitude and behaviour of their teacher. They must never twist the teachings of the Holy Quran to fit their school of thought and instead they must change their thinking and behaviour to match the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This will ensure they

adopt the correct path, which involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly. This will lead to peace of mind in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 253:

“…If Allāh had willed, those [generations] succeeding them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. And if Allāh had willed, they would not have fought each other, but Allāh does what He intends.”

It is important to understand that Allah, the Exalted, does not force guidance or misguidance on anyone, as this would make the test of this world pointless. The test of this world, which is whether or not one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly, is only meaningful when people have the free will to choose what to do. Allah, the Exalted, advises people to follow the correct code of conduct, for their own sake. He also aids those who strive to implement His code of conduct but does not force guidance on those who desire to choose a different code of conduct to live by. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 29:

“And say, "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve."…”

Allah, the Exalted, then gives a warning to the muslims to adhere to the code of conduct He has granted them so that they achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 254:

"O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you before there comes a Day in which there is no exchange [i.e., ransom] and no friendship and no intercession…"

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Just like a fruit bearing tree is only useful when it produces fruit, similarly, faith is only useful when it produces good actions. In this case, muslims are being called towards actualising their faith by using the blessings they have been granted correctly so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. As discussed earlier, as Allah, the Exalted, alone knows all things, especially the mental and physical state of humans, He alone can provide a code of conduct which leads to peace of mind and body.

Muslims must understand that this world is the abode of work while the hereafter is the abode of reward and recompense. If one fails to work in the abode of work then they will be left empty handed in the hereafter. Therefore, they should not behave as if this world is the abode of reward and relaxation

and instead understand its true nature and purpose. It is a bridge which takes one to their eternal home. Therefore, they must busy themself using the blessings they have been given correctly, according to Islamic teachings, so that they achieve peace of mind this world and salvation on a Day when one's worldly blessings or relationships will not benefit them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 254:

“O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you before there comes a Day in which there is no exchange [i.e., ransom] and no friendship and no intercession…”

A person may be able to achieve their worldly desires, such as escaping the consequences of their actions in this world, through the things mentioned in this verse but on Judgement Day, none of these things will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. This eliminates the wishful thinking which has become quite widespread amongst muslims who believe that one of the methods mentioned in this verse will be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 254:

“O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you before there comes a Day in which there is no exchange [i.e., ransom]…”

For example, some believe that they will make peace with Allah, the Exalted, through sincere repentance or some other way on Judgement Day. But Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that one can only make peace with Him in this world through His sincere obedience. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 24:

“So [even] if they are patient, the Fire is a residence for them; and if they ask to appease [Allāh], they will not be of those who are allowed to appease.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 254:

“O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you before there comes a Day in which there is no exchange [i.e., ransom] and no friendship and no intercession…”

Some believe they will be saved from the consequences of their actions through one of their relationships, such as a friendship, relative or a spiritual guide. Even though the concept of intercession on Judgement Day for muslims is a fact none the less, the one who adopts a misguided attitude whereby they persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, while believing someone else will save them from the consequences of their actions is mocking the concept of intercession. The one who mocks the concept of intercession may find that it is not granted to them. And even if it is granted to them, it may not be enough to save them from entering Hell, even if their sentence is reduced. One must bear in mind that even a moment in Hell is absolutely unbearable. Therefore, a muslim must abandon all forms of wishful thinking and instead adopt true hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Real hope in Allah, the Exalted, involves striving to sincerely obey Him, which involves using the blessings one has been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings,

and then hope that Allah, the Exalted, will have mercy on them in both worlds. The difference between wishful thinking and hope in Allah, the Exalted, has been discussed in this way in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. But those who persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, may well join the non-muslims on Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 254:

“…And the disbelievers - they are the wrongdoers.”

This is because faith is like a plant which must be nourished in order to survive. The same way a plant will die if it fails to obtain nourishment, such as sunlight, so may well the faith of a person who fails to nourish it with acts of obedience.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 254:

“…And the disbelievers - they are the wrongdoers.”

In addition, the wrongdoer is the one who misplaces and misuses the blessings they have been granted. As non-muslims do not follow the code of conduct granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, they fall within the category of wrongdoers. Muslims must therefore avoid this behaviour even if their

verbally claim to believing in Allah, the Exalted, otherwise, they may well end up with the non-muslims in the hereafter. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4031, that a person who imitates a group of people is counted as one of them.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 255

ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ٱلۡحَىُّ ٱلۡقَيُّومُۚ لَا تَأۡخُذُهُۥ سِنَةٞ وَلَا نَوۡمٞۚ لَّهُۥ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلۡأَرۡضِۗ
مَن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يَشۡفَعُ عِندَهُۥٓ إِلَّا بِإِذۡنِهِۦۚ يَعۡلَمُ مَا بَيۡنَ أَيۡدِيهِمۡ وَمَا خَلۡفَهُمۡۖ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَىۡءٖ
مِّنۡ عِلۡمِهِۦٓ إِلَّا بِمَا شَآءَۚ وَسِعَ كُرۡسِيُّهُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضَۖ وَلَا يَـُٔودُهُۥ حِفۡظُهُمَاۚ وَهُوَ ٱلۡعَلِىُّ
ٱلۡعَظِيمُ ٢٥٥

“Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His footstool extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.”

Islam teaches mankind that the only One they must obey in every situation is their Creator and Sustainer, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

"*Allah - there is no deity except Him…"*

In reality, whoever one obeys and models their life on is what they worship, even if they claim not to believe in any deity. Humans have been created in a way whereby they must obey and follow something. Whether this something are other people, social media, fashion, culture or even their own desires. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

"Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?..."

Whatever or whoever a person obeys and follows is who they worship. Therefore, muslims must support their verbal declaration of faith with actions by sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, in every situation over all other things. This involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who behaves in this manner will be granted peace of mind and success by the Most Merciful. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 163:

“And your god is one God. There is no deity [worthy of worship] except Him, the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful.”

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who rejects the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, and instead obeys and worships other things will be deprived of the mercy needed to obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if they possess the entire world and experience moments of fun and entertainment, as no one can escape the control and authority of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

"*Allāh - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining…"*

When one observes the creation of the Heavens and the Earth and the countless perfectly balanced systems, it becomes clear that there is only One who created and sustains the universe. For example, the perfect distance of the Sun from the Earth is a clear sign, as the Earth would not be inhabitable if the Sun was slightly closer or further away from it. Similarly, the Earth has been created in such a way which creates a balanced and pure atmosphere which allows life to thrive on it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 164:

"…*and the alternation of the night and the day…"*

The perfecting timings of the days and nights and their varied lengths throughout the year allow people to obtain maximum benefit from them. If the days were longer, people would become exhausted from the long hours. If the nights were longer, people would not have enough time to earn their livelihood and other useful things, such as knowledge. If the nights were shorter, then people would not be able to rest enough to obtain optimal health. Changes to the length of the day and nights would also affect crops, which would have a detrimental impact on the provision of people and animals. The fact that the days and nights and other balanced systems within the universe operate in perfect harmony also clearly indicates the Oneness of Allah, the Exalted, as multiple Gods would desire different things, which would lead to chaos within the universe. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

"Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined…"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 164:

"…*and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain…"*

When one observes the perfectly balanced water cycle it also clearly indicates a Creator. Water from the sea evaporates, rises and then

condenses to produce acidic rain which comes down upon the mountains. These mountains neutralise the acidic rain so that people and animals can utilise it. If there were any changes to this perfectly balanced system it would lead to disaster for people and animals on Earth. The salt in the sea prevents the dead creatures within the ocean from contaminating it. If the ocean was allowed to become contaminated then sea life would not be possible and the impurity from the oceans would overwhelm life on land also. The water within the oceans and seas have been created in such a way that sea life can thrive within it while heavy ships can sail on top of it. If the composition of water was slightly different an imbalance would occur which would cause either sea life to thrive within the water or allow ships to sail on top of it but both would not be possible at the same time. Even to this very day, transport by sea is still the most commonly used form of transporting goods across the world. This perfect balance is therefore essential to life on Earth.

Evolution is a form of mutation, which by its nature is imperfect. But when one observes the countless species they will find that they have been created in a perfectly balanced way so that they can thrive in the environment they live in. For example, the camel was designed to withstand high temperatures and go for long periods of time without the need to drink water. They are perfectly designed for desert life. Chapter 88 Al Ghashiyah, verse 17:

"Then do they not look at the camels - how they are created?"

The goat was designed in such a perfect way that impurities within its body are perfectly separated from the milk it produces. Any mixing of the two would make the milk undrinkable. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 66:

“And indeed, for you in grazing livestock is a lesson. We give you drink from what is in their bellies - between excretion and blood - pure milk, palatable to drinkers.”

Each species has been granted a specific life span which prevents one species overcoming others. For example, flies have a very short life span, 3-4 weeks, and lay up to 500 eggs. If its lifespan was longer, then the population of flies would become disproportionate and would cause them to overwhelm all other species in this world. Whereas, other creatures which have a very long life span have the ability to produce only a few offspring. Again this allows for their population to be moderated. All of this cannot be an accident nor can the process of evolution explain it. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 164:

“…*and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and earth…”*

The winds are essential for wind pollination, which allow for crops, plants and trees to reproduce. In the earlier days, wind was essential for sea travel, which to this very day, is the main mode of transporting goods across the world. Winds are required to move the rainclouds to specific locations in order to provide water for the creation, something they cannot live without. A perfectly balanced system of the winds is observed within the Earth, as a lack of winds would lead to chaos for the creation and an increase in winds

also leads to chaos for the creation. Similarly, rain is also perfectly balanced, as too little rain leads to droughts and famine and too much rain leads to mass floods. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verse 18:

"And We have sent down rain from the sky in a measured amount and settled it in the earth. And indeed, We are Able to take it away."

This perfectly balanced system cannot be random and clearly shows the hand of the Creator. The one who reflects on all these perfectly balanced systems cannot logically deny the existence of a single Creator who has power over all things.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

"*Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining…"*

In reality, the one who can experience death and is sustained by something or someone else cannot be a deity. This reality alone rules out divinity for every entity within the Heavens and the Earth except Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as Allah, the Exalted alone created life and death and sustains the creation, He alone is worthy of obedience. A person that takes care of some aspects of another person's provision, such as their housing, is worthy of

being shown gratitude. Therefore, as Allah, the Exalted, has granted every blessing within this universe to people it is only fair and right that people show Him gratitude. Gratitude with one's intention involves only doing things in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The one who acts for other reasons will not obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A positive sign of a good intention is that a person does not expect nor hope for any appreciation or compensation from people. Gratitude with the tongue involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. And gratitude with one's actions involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to an increase in blessings and ultimately peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Furthermore, when a person owns an object it is considered correct and normal for them to use the object however they please. As Allah, the Exalted, created, owns and sustains everything within the universe, including people, then He alone decides what should occur within the universe and what should not. Therefore, it is only fair for a person to obey Allah, the Exalted, as He alone owns the entire universe, including them.

Similarly, when one lends something they own to another, it is only fair that they use the item according to the wishes of its owner. Allah, the Exalted, granted every blessing a person possesses as a loan. He did not grant it to them as a gift. Like worldly loans, this loan must be repaid. The only way to repay this loan is to use them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, as the blessings of Paradise are a gift, people will be free to use them as they desire. Chapter 7 Al A’raf, verse 43:

“…And they will be called, "This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do."”

A person must therefore not confuse the worldly blessings which are a loan with the gifts of Paradise.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

“*Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living…”*

Generally speaking, the fact that Allah, the Exalted, is Ever-living should remind one of their own mortality. As everyone’s time is limited in this world they must strive to fulfil their purpose within it before their time runs out. This purpose is involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Chapter 67 Al Mulk, verse 2:

“[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is better in deed…”

The one fails to make use of their life by fulfilling their purpose in this world will lead an aimless and pointless existence, even if they manage to obtain worldly success. As a result, they will never find peace of mind, even if they have moments of fun. Just like an invention which fails to fulfil its primary function of creation is classified as a failure, even if it possesses some good qualities, so will the person who fails to fulfil their purpose in this world, even if they obtain some worldly success. This failure is experienced as an emptiness which all people feel within their lives, sooner or later, and as a result it prevents them from obtaining peace of mind.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

“*Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining…”*

Generally speaking, as Allah, the Exalted, is Self-sustaining and sustains the creation, one should seek all good worldly and religious things from Him. This is only achieved through His sincere obedience. In addition, as people are extremely short sighted and possess very little knowledge, they must seek general worldly good things from Allah, the Exalted, as they do not know what will be good for them or not. There are many examples within one’s life where they desired something only for it to become a source of stress for them. And when they disliked something only for it to become a source of goodness for them. Therefore, one must adhere to asking for general good things instead of seeking specific things from Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 200-201:

“And among the people is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will have in the Hereafter no share. But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.""

In addition, one must act on the self-sustaining divine attribute of Allah, the Exalted, according to their created potential. This involves striving to become independent of the creation and only relying on Allah, the Exalted. This is achieved when one refrains from adopting a lazy attitude whereby they rely on people instead of using the resources they have been granted, such as

their physical strength, in order to fulfil their needs and responsibilities. Only when one has exhausted their resources should they ask others for assistance.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

"*Allah - there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep…"*

This verse also indicates another extremely important reality which is often misunderstood by muslims. Non-muslims who believed in Allah, the Exalted, often attributed human deficiencies to Him, such as becoming tired. As a result, they treated Allah, the Exalted, as a worldly king. A worldly king cannot manage the affairs of his kingdom by himself and therefore appoints helpers, such as governors, to help him manage his kingdom. As a result of this belief, many of these people began to worship other things in order to please Allah, the Exalted, such as idols. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 3:

"…And those who take protectors besides Him [say], "We only worship them that they may bring us nearer to Allāh in position."…"

This same concept has been adopted by some muslims also. These muslims dedicate time, energy and wealth to finding spiritual people who are supposedly connected to Allah, the Exalted, in a special way, just like a governor is connected to the king in a special way. Their aim is to please the spiritual person so that they can intercede on their behalf with Allah, the Exalted, just like a governor can intercede with the king on behalf of someone who pleases the governor, with gifts and unnatural demonstrations of respect and love. These spiritual people act as gate keepers between the common masses and Allah, the Exalted, which completely contradicts the teachings of Islam. The Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, did not act like gatekeepers. They instead showed the path and method that leads to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and never asked for any type of payment from people, such as gifts. Therefore, a muslim must learn Islamic knowledge from a qualified teacher and show them the respect they deserve but they should not believe they should worship people who appear spiritual in order to reach and please Allah, the Exalted. This is further supported by the main verse under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

"…To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills…"

Allah, the Exalted, alone has complete control and authority over the universe and knows everything which occurs within it. He therefore does not need gatekeepers between Himself and people. This is something which has been made clear within the Holy Quran. For example, chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 186:

“And when My servants ask you, concerning Me - indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me…”

And chapter 40 Ghafir, verse 60:

“And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you."…”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

“…*Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission?...”*

In addition, even though intercession will occur on Judgement Day, after Allah, the Exalted, gives permission, none the less, a person must not mock its concept otherwise they may well be denied it. Mocking intercession involves adopting a lazy attitude whereby a person fails to use the blessings they have been granted as outlined in Islamic teachings and still expects someone else to save them on Judgement Day, such as a relative or a spiritual teacher. Even if intercession is accepted, due to their lazy attitude it may not prevent them from entering Hell, even if their sentence is reduced. And it is important to realise that even a moment in Hell is truly unbearable.

Therefore, one must have real hope in the concept of intercession. This involves striving to use the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and then hope for intercession from people on Judgement Day. Whichever attitude a person chooses to adopt, Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their intentions, speech and actions and will therefore hold them accountable in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

"…He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills…"

As all of one's knowledge has been granted by none other than Allah, the Exalted, it is essential they use it in the correct way. Using knowledge correctly will lead to benefit for them and others in both worlds. Whereas, the one who misuses knowledge, especially religious knowledge, for the sake of worldly gain, such as leadership and wealth, will find that these things become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them in both worlds. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 253, that whoever obtains religious knowledge to attract attention to themself will go to Hell.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

“…He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills…”

In addition, this reminds people that as Allah, the Exalted, has knowledge of all things, including the mental and physical states of humans, and is free from making mistakes, He alone can therefore provide mankind the perfect code of conduct which leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. He alone can teach mankind how to place everything and everyone within their life in the correct place so that they achieve peace of mind. Irrespective of the knowledge and experience obtained by people, they will never be able to achieve this vital aim. Just like a person takes advice from people according to the knowledge they possess, one must accept and act on the all-encompassing advice and knowledge of Allah, the Exalted, so that they achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds, even if it contradicts their desires. This is because controlling one’s desires is a small price to pay to achieve peace of mind and body, just like a person control’s their diet to achieve good physical health. Whereas, life becomes a dark prison for the one who fails to obtain peace of mind, even if they fulfil all their desires. This is quite obvious when one observes the rich and famous.

Verse 255 concludes with mentioning the complete authority and control of Allah, the Exalted, over all things. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

“…His Footstool extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.”

There is no need to delve into the specifics about the Footstool. One must believe in what has been stated and appreciate the all-encompassing power and knowledge of Allah, the Exalted. Generally speaking, one must avoid studying topics within religious knowledge which will not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. A good way of judging whether a topic of religious knowledge is relevant or not is by assessing whether that is something Allah, the Exalted, will ask them about on Judgement Day. If they will not be questioned about a particular topic in Islam, such as specific events within Islamic history, then that topic is irrelevant and should be avoided. But if a topic will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of one's neighbour, then this topic must be researched, learned and acted upon to the best of one's potential.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

"…His Footstool extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great."

In addition, a person must not be fooled into believing Allah, the Exalted, is not aware of what occurs within the universe or He is not in a position to hold people accountable for their actions. This can occur when the consequences of one's actions, such as punishment, does not occur immediately or in a way which is obvious to them. In most cases, all people experience the

consequences of their actions in a subtle way whereby the very worldly things they have obtained through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them. This is obvious when one observes the people who behave in this manner and how they are consumed by mental health issues even though they have access to the luxuries of this world. In addition, in most cases, Allah, the Exalted, gives people respite so that they can improve their behaviour. Therefore, a person must not confuse a delay in punishment for no punishment. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verse 45:

"And I will give them time. Indeed, My plan is firm."

Therefore, a person must make use of the respite they are given in order to sincerely repent and reform their behaviour before their time runs out. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 255:

"…And He is the Most High, the Most Great."

This also indicates that whether one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, or not has no effect on His infinite status. The effects of one's behaviour will only affect them in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 7:

"If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, [you do it] to them [i.e., yourselves]…"

Each person will face the consequences of their actions in both worlds, therefore, one must choose to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, for their own sake, even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Just like this patient will obtain good mental and physical health so will the person who obeys Allah, the Exalted. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted correctly, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. As Allah, the Exalted, knows all things, such as the mental and physical states of humans, He alone can provide the code of conduct which leads to a balanced mental and physical state, which in turn leads to peace of mind. Even though, in most cases, patients do not understand the science behind the medicines they are prescribed and therefore blindly trust their doctor, Allah, the Exalted, invites people to reflect on the teachings of Islam so that they can appreciate its positive effects on their lives. He does not expect people to blindly trust the teachings of Islam and instead He wants them to recognize its truthfulness from its clear proofs. But this requires a person to adopt an unbiased and open mind when approaching the teachings of Islam. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….”"

And chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But if one chooses to ignore this reality then it makes no difference to the greatness of Allah, the Exalted, as they will suffer the consequences in both worlds, even if they experience moments of fun. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In addition, as indicated by the main verse under discussion, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls all things within the universe, including the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind and who does not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And it is clear that Allah, the Exalted, will only give peace of mind to those who use the blessings He has granted them correctly.

To conclude, the main verse under discussion removes the misunderstanding which often arises in the minds of ignorant people namely, the false assumption that Allah, the Exalted, had sent His Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, so that all diversity and disagreement would end

indefinitely. The people who accepted this belief observed considerable diversity and disagreement amongst people even after the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, were sent and the fact that falsehood existed side by side with truth. This led them to believe that this state of affairs might suggest helplessness on the part of Allah, the Exalted, meaning He had failed to stamp out the evils He wanted to. The reply to this was given in an earlier verse namely, that it was not the will of Allah, the Exalted, to compel all human beings to follow one and the same way. Had it been so people could not have deviated from the course set for them by Allah, Exalted. This has been mentioned in the next verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 253:

"…And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the Pure Spirit [i.e., Jibraeel]. If Allāh had willed, those [generations] succeeding them would not have fought each other after the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved. And if Allāh had willed, they would not have fought each other, but Allāh does what He intends."

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become distinct from the wrong…"

Tthe point is then made that no matter how many divergent beliefs, viewpoints, ways of life and conduct exist in life the reality underlying the order of the universe is the one stated in the main verse under discussion and it remains unaffected by the misconceptions of people.

Finally, as the entire creation belongs to and is under the complete control and jurisdiction of Allah, the Exalted, a person has no choice but to comply with His rules. Just like a person will face trouble if they fail to comply with the rules set by the government in charge of a particular country, so will they face trouble in both worlds if they fail to comply with the rules of the Owner of the universe. A person may be able to leave a country if they are not pleased with its rules but they will not be able to escape to a place where the rules and jurisdiction of Allah, the Exalted, do not apply. A person may be able to change the rules of their society but they will never be able to change the rules of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, just like a person who owns a house decides the rules of the house, even if other people object to these rules, similarly, the universe belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore, He alone decides the rules of this universe, whether people like these rules or not. Therefore, one must comply with these rules, for their own sake. The one who understands this fact will comply with the rules of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to obey Him by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A person can either strive to learn the wisdoms behind the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, so that they understand how they benefit them and the wider society and how they lead to peace of mind and body in both worlds or they can worship their desires and reject the teachings of Islam. But the one who fails to comply with Islamic teachings should prepare themselves to face the consequences of their choice in both worlds and no objections, protests or complaints will save them as nothing can overpower Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 29:

“And say, "The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills - let him believe; and whoever wills - let him disbelieve." Indeed, We have prepared for the wrongdoers a fire whose walls will surround them. And if they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like murky oil, which scalds [their] faces. Wretched is the drink, and evil is the resting place.”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 256-257

لَآ إِكۡرَاهَ فِي ٱلدِّينِ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ ٱلرُّشۡدُ مِنَ ٱلۡغَيِّ فَمَن يَكۡفُرۡ بِٱلطَّٰغُوتِ وَيُؤۡمِنۢ بِٱللَّهِ
فَقَدِ ٱسۡتَمۡسَكَ بِٱلۡعُرۡوَةِ ٱلۡوُثۡقَىٰ لَا ٱنفِصَامَ لَهَاۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾

ٱللَّهُ وَلِيُّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ يُخۡرِجُهُم مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓاْ أَوۡلِيَآؤُهُمُ
ٱلطَّٰغُوتُ يُخۡرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ ٱلنُّورِ إِلَى ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ أُوْلَٰٓئِكَ أَصۡحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِۖ هُمۡ فِيهَا
خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

“There shall be no compulsion in the religion. The right course has become distinct from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in false objects of worship and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing.

Allah is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into the light. And those who disbelieve - their allies are false objects of worship. They take them out of the light into darknesses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.”

As discussed in the previous verse, even though Allah, the Exalted, has complete power, control and authority over all things, none the less, He does not force guidance on anyone nor does He allow people to force others to accept or act on faith. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

"There shall be no compulsion in the religion…"

Forcing guidance on people would make life in this world pointless. The point of life in this world is for people to use the free will they have been granted in order to choose for themselves what way of life to adopt. In addition, as accepting faith is a matter of the spiritual heart, a person cannot force another to accept Islam. This alone rules out the incorrect belief that Islam spread by the sword.

Allah, the Exalted, then explains that as the paths of right guidance and misguidance have been made clear, there is no need to compel anyone to accept faith and therefore each person has the right to choose what path to accept. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

"*There shall be no compulsion in the religion. The right course has become distinct from the wrong…"*

Some believe that this verse was abrogated by other verses connected to fighting. But this belief creates confusion in respect to the teachings of Islam. The better position is that it has not been abrogated and there are numerous reasons why this is the case.

As discussed earlier, Islam is something which must be accepted by a person's heart not just through their words and actions. As the affair of a person's heart is hidden forcing them to accept Islam becomes a pointless endeavor. Allah, the Exalted, has repeatedly condemned and harshly criticized those who accept Islam with their tongues but reject it in their hearts. This would be the outcome of the one who is forced to accept Islam. Allah, the Exalted, would never be satisfied with this code of conduct as open disbelief is preferred over hypocrisy. This is obvious as the lowest level in Hell has been reserved for the hypocrites. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 145:

"Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire…"

In addition, the Holy Quran makes it clear that the people of the book, the Jews and Christians, living in an Islamic state can live in peace and with full rights even if they do not accept Islam by paying a tax. If Muslims were allowed to force others to accept Islam there is no need to prescribe this tax. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 29:

“Fight against those who do not believe in Allāh or in the Last Day and who do not consider unlawful what Allāh and His Messenger have made unlawful and who do not adopt the religion of truth from those who were given the Scripture - [fight] until they give the jizyah [tax]…”

In addition, if verse 256 was abrogated that would mean the clear path is no longer distinct from the wrong path. This would mean Islam was not perfected and completed by Allah, the Exalted, even though it was. Chapter 5 Al Ma’idah, verse 3:

“…This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islām as religion…”

And if the clear path was no longer distinct from the wrong path then a person cannot be blamed for choosing the wrong path in life, which is clearly not the case according to the teachings of the entire Holy Quran. These and many other proofs indicate that verse 256 has not been abrogated.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

“*There shall be no compulsion in the religion. The right course has become distinct from the wrong…”*

This also eliminates the foolish belief that ignorance will save someone from the consequences of their actions. Some intentionally avoid studying Islamic knowledge so that they can use ignorance as an excuse to escape facing the consequences of their actions. As Allah, the Exalted, has made the correct path distinct from the wrong path, there is no excuses left for a person to avoid learning Islamic knowledge and therefore choosing the right path in life. The moment a person accepted Islam as their faith it became their responsibility to learn Islamic knowledge so that they choose the correct path in life. This is similar to the responsibility of an employee to do their duty the moment they accepted a job. In addition, differentiating between right and wrong has been planted within human nature. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2389. This is why even non-muslims educate their children to avoid doing bad things, even the bad things which have no consequences in respect to worldly authority, such as the police. Therefore, because of this innate characteristic to differentiate between right and wrong, even non-muslims are left with no excuses but to search for and accept the right path in life, which leads to peace of mind in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

"*…The right course has become distinct from the wrong…"*

This also indicates the importance of understanding that worldly knowledge is not enough to differentiate between the right and wrong path in life. Sadly, many educated muslims believe that their worldly knowledge and intelligence is enough to guide them to the right path in life. This path can only be obtained through Islamic knowledge which is obtained through the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, the one who claims to be muslim must make it their priority to learn and act on Islamic knowledge just like they struggle to gain worldly knowledge. This attitude must also be passed on to the next generation by parents and the elders of the muslim society.

In addition, as this right path consists of learning and acting on the two sources of guidance: the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, one must avoid acting on other sources of religious knowledge, even if leads to good deeds. The more one acts on other sources of religious knowledge, the less they will act on the two sources of guidance, which in turn leads to misguidance. This is one of the reasons why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4606, that any matter which is not rooted in the two sources of guidance will be rejected by Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

"…*So whoever disbelieves in false objects of worship and believes in Allah…"*

This indicates the importance of understanding that Islam is not like a coat which can be put on and taken off as one pleases. Islam is a way of life which affects every situation and breath one takes. Its teachings must be implemented when one interacts with every worldly blessing they have been granted. Therefore, according to this verse, the one who picks and chooses when to obey Allah, the Exalted, and when to disobey Him, by obeying false objects of worships, such as social media, fashion and culture, does not truly believe in Allah, the Exalted. This verses does not mean one must become perfect and never disobey Allah, the Exalted, but it means they must not adopt an attitude whereby they persistently and intentionally pick and choose when to obey Allah, the Exalted, and when to obey other things over Him. Therefore, one must strive to use the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they practically prove their verbal declaration of faith. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

"…*So whoever disbelieves in false objects of worship and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it…"*

As Allah, the Exalted, alone knows all things, including the mental and physical states of people, He alone can provide the perfect code of conduct which leads to peace of mind in both worlds. In addition, the knowledge and advice of Allah, the Exalted, will also teach one how to place everyone and everything within their life correctly so that it increases their peace of mind. This knowledge cannot be provided by another as their knowledge is extremely limited. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 256:

"…And Allāh is Hearing and Knowing."

Therefore, the one who sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings will be granted the mental and physical support they need to overcome every situation they face so that they achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verses 256-257:

"…*So whoever disbelieves in false objects of worship and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allāh is Hearing and Knowing. Allāh is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into the light. And those who disbelieve - their allies are false objects of worship. They take them out of the light into darknesses…"*

Whereas, the one who fails to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, will not be granted this mental and physical support and as a result they will be overcome by the different situations they face within their life. As a result, they will not achieve peace of mind in this world or in the next. In addition, it is important to understand that a person can only achieve peace of mind when they achieve a stable mental and physical state. But as false objects of worship, such as social media, fashion and culture, are weak and unstable things, the person who obeys them will become weak and unstable. This person's happiness, sadness, love and hate will all revolve around these weak and ever changing things. This will prevent them from achieving a

stable and balanced mental and physical state, which in turn will prevent them from achieving peace of mind. Whereas, the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, is rooted in principles which are stable, firm and timeless. Therefore, the one who attaches to these principles will achieve stability and firmness in their mental and physical states. This leads to peace of mind. This is just like when a person attaches to an influential and powerful person within their society and as a result, the person becomes strong within their society because of their relationship. Whereas, the one who attaches to a weak person within their society, will only achieve weakness. This is the state of the one who attaches to false objects of worship, such as social media, fashion and culture. Chapter 22 Al Hajj, verse 73:

"…Weak are the pursuer and pursued."

This is quite obvious when one observes those who blindly follow and obey these things and how as a result, they adopt a weak and unbalanced mental state. This leads to countless mental health issues, such as extreme stress, depression and suicidal tendencies. This is a major reason why mental health issues within society have increased exponentially with the rise and influence of social media, fashion and culture.

In addition, the aim of Allah, the Exalted, is to aid mankind to achieve peace of mind in both worlds while He gains nothing from their success or failure in this aim. Whereas, the leaders of the false objects of worship, such as the people behind social media, fashion and culture, aim to gather wealth and social influence over society and do not care for the wellbeing of people. This is quite obvious when one observes these things as they refuse to take the

steps which would aid in protecting the mental and physical wellbeing of the general public, such as enhanced safety features on social media platforms, as this would reduce the wealth and social influence they can obtain. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 257:

"*Allāh is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into the light. And those who disbelieve - their allies are false objects of worship. They take them out of the light into darknesses…"*

It is important to note that a person will only achieve peace of mind, which is like living within light, when they adopt true belief. This involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 5 Al Ma'idah, verses 15-16:

"…There has come to you from Allāh a light and a clear Book. By which Allāh guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path."

Therefore, one must support their verbal declaration of faith with actions, otherwise they will remain in the darkness of difficulties, stress and trouble in both worlds. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

This is a major reason why those who fulfil the minimal obligations fail to achieve peace of mind as they fail to use the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings.

The one who chooses darkness over light in this world will miss out on the light of Paradise and instead be left in the darkness of Hell in the hereafter. As Allah, the Exalted, alone created and controls the universe, this outcome is inevitable and inescapable irrespective of the opinions of people. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 257:

"…And those who disbelieve - their allies are false objects of worship. They take them out of the light into darknesses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein."

Therefore one must, for the sake of their own mental and physical health in both worlds, choose to pursue the light in this world so that it leads to the

light of Paradise in the hereafter, even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

To conclude, as discussed earlier, one can only achieve a life full of light in both worlds when they adopt true belief. This is when they support their verbal declaration of faith with actions. These actions involve using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings. But as warned in verse 257, the one who fails to actualize their faith may well lose it, which leads to darkness in this world and in the hereafter. This is because faith is like a plant which must be nourished with good actions. Just like a plant will die if it fails to obtain nourishment, such as sunlight, so may well the faith of a person die if they fail to nourish it with acts of obedience to Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 257:

"*Allāh is the Ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into the light. And those who disbelieve - their allies are false objects of worship. They take them out of the light into darknesses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.*"

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 258

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى ٱلَّذِى حَآجَّ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمَ فِى رَبِّهِۦٓ أَنْ ءَاتَىٰهُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ رَبِّىَ ٱلَّذِى
يُحْىِۦ وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا۠ أُحْىِۦ وَأُمِيتُ ۖ قَالَ إِبْرَٰهِـۧمُ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَأْتِى بِٱلشَّمْسِ مِنَ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ
بِهَا مِنَ ٱلْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ ٱلَّذِى كَفَرَ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِى ٱلْقَوْمَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٨﴾

“Have you not considered the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord [merely] because Allah had given him kingship? When Abraham said, "My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death," he said, "I give life and cause death." Abraham said, "Indeed, Allah brings up the sun from the east, so bring it up from the west." So the disbeliever was overwhelmed [by astonishment], and Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.”

The beginning of this verse indicates the importance of avoiding a self-absorbed attitude whereby one only ever thinks about their own life and especially their own problems. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 258:

"*Have you not considered the…"*

The one who behaves in this manner will fail to make use of the lessons found within general history, their own personal history and the condition of people around them. Learning from these things is one of the most powerful ways a person can improve their behaviour and avoid history repeating itself so that they achieve peace of mind. For example, the one who observes the rich and famous misusing the blessings they have been granted and how, as a result they are plagued with stress, mental disorders, substance addiction and suicidal tendencies, even though they experience moments of fun and enjoy the luxuries of this world, will teach the observer not to follow in their footsteps by misusing the blessings they have been granted and they will be convinced that peace of mind does not lie in possessing many worldly things. Or when a person observes a sick person, it should encourage them to show gratitude for their own good health and to use it correctly before they lose it also. Therefore, Islam regularly encourages muslims to become observant people instead of people which are absorbed in their own affairs that they do not pay attention to anything else. Chapter 47 Muhammad, verse 10:

"Have they not traveled through the land and seen how was the end of those before them?..."

Allah, the Exalted, teaches the importance of avoiding an arrogant mentality which is often fuelled by one's social influence and power within their society. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 258:

"Have you not considered the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord [merely] because Allāh had given him kingship?..."

Both the non-muslims of Mecca who were considered the leaders of the Arabian Peninsula and the scholars from the people of the book in Medina were allowing their love of leadership to reject the call of Islam, even though they both recognised its truthfulness. The non-muslims of Mecca knew the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, for 40 years prior to him announcing Prophethood and fully believed he was nothing but trustworthy and honest. They were masters of the Arabic language and full well knew the Holy Quran did not come from any creature. Chapter 10 Yunus, verse 16:

"…for I had remained among you a lifetime before it. Then will you not reason?"

And the scholars from the people of the book recognized the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as they both had been described in their divine scriptures. In addition, their scholars recognized the Holy Quran as they were familiar with its Author, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 6 Al An'am, verse 20:

"Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize it [the Holy Quran] as they recognize their [own] sons…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 146:

"Those to whom We gave the Scripture know him [Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him] as they know their own sons…"

In addition, the fact that the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was reciting truthful historical accounts and beneficial lessons even though he was unlettered and had not studied the previous divine scriptures, which both the people of the book and the non-Muslims of Mecca full well knew, was a clear sign of his Prophethood and the truthfulness of Islam.

Therefore, a person should never let any worldly thing they possess, such as wealth and leadership, prevent them from accepting the truth as this is the only way one can achieve success in both worldly and religious matters. A person should approach every situation with an open mind and accept or reject something based on clear evidence instead of their predetermined choice.

In addition, a person must realize that whatever blessing they have been granted, such as wealth and leadership, was only granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, so that they could use it in the correct way, according to Islamic teachings. This would lead to the spread of justice and peace of mind within the society. But the one who adopts arrogance over the things they have been granted will fail to use them in the correct way and as a result these worldly things will become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them and others in both worlds. This is quite evident when one observes history and the people of this day and age who misuse the worldly blessings, such as wealth and leadership, they have been granted. Chapter 23 Al Mu'minun, verses 55-56:

"Do they think that what We extend to them of wealth and children. Is [because] We hasten for them good things? Rather, they do not perceive."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 258:

“…When Abraham said, "My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death," he said, "I give life and cause death."…”

Namrud attempted to fool the people listening to their discussion by intentionally misinterpreting what the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, said. The Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was referring to the origins of creation meaning, life, and the creator and source of death. Namrud only indicated the outward manifestation of these two processes even though he was aware that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was referring to the innate origins of these two processes. Meaning, the outward manifestation of these two processes is nothing special. Outwardly, even doctors can give life by healing a sick person through medicine. Outwardly, a murderer gives death. So Namrud attributing the outward manifestation of life and death to himself was nothing special. He only did this to confuse the people listening to their discussion. This attitude of misinterpreting and taking things out of their context has always been the way of those who dislike accepting the truth, such as politicians. A muslim must avoid this attitude as it will only ever lead to trouble for them in both worlds, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 35 Fatir, verse 43:

“…but the evil plot does not encompass except its own people. Then do they await except the way [i.e., fate] of the former peoples?...”

One must instead adopt a straight forward and upright attitude so that they interpret things correctly and do not take things out of their context. This will allow them to benefit from the truth in both religious and worldly situations so that it aids them to gain peace of mind, even if it contradicts their desires.

Behaving in this manner is actually a characteristic of belief and must therefore be adopted by anyone who claims to be a muslim. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 70:

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice.”

As Namrud evaded referring to the source of life and death and instead attempted to confuse the people listening by discussing the outward manifestation of life and death, the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, then used his mentality against him by discussing the outward manifestation of the Sun. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 258:

“…Abraham said, "Indeed, Allāh brings up the sun from the east, so bring it up from the west." So the disbeliever was overwhelmed [by astonishment]…”

In reality, even Namrud understood that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was speaking the truth. If he truly believed that the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, was not being truthful he could have simply demanded him to ask Allah, the Exalted, to cause the Sun to rise from the west in order to prove his Prophethood. Namrud did not request this as he knew this miracle would make the truth apparent to his people. As indicated by the end of the main verse under discussion, the one who behaves in this

manner, whereby they reject the clear truth because it contradicts their desires, will not obtain right guidance. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 258:

“…and Allāh does not guide the wrongdoing people.”

Right guidance is vital in order to successfully journey through every situation so that one makes the correct choices in life so that they obtain peace of mind. Just like a person who is physically lost will only experience stress, anxiety and even fear, so will the person who fails to obtain right guidance in their everyday life. Therefore, the wrongdoer, the one who persists on misusing the blessings they have been granted, will live a life of stress and anxiety, even if they experience moments of fun. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind

while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, a person must accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake, even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings. This is because the only One who has the knowledge required to ensure a person achieves a balanced mental and physical state is Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the mental and physical states of humans possessed by society will never be enough to achieve this outcome, despite all the research that has been undertaken, as they cannot solve every issue a person can face within their life nor can their advice cause one to avoid all types of mental and physical stress due to limited knowledge, experience and foresight. Allah, the Exalted, alone has this knowledge and He has granted it to mankind in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This truth is obvious when one observes those who use the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings and those who do not. Even though, in most cases, patients do not understand the science behind the medicines they are prescribed and therefore blindly trust their doctor, Allah, the Exalted, invites people to reflect on the teachings of Islam so that they can appreciate its positive effects on their lives. He does not expect people to blindly trust the teachings of Islam and instead He wants them to recognize its truthfulness from its clear proofs. But this requires a person to adopt an unbiased and open mind when approaching the teachings of Islam. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….””

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains it and who does not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And it is clear that Allah, the Exalted, will only give peace of mind to those who use the blessings He has granted them correctly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 258:

“…and Allāh does not guide the wrongdoing people.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 258:

“Have you not considered the one who argued with Abraham about his Lord [merely] because Allāh had given him kingship? When Abraham said, "My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death," he said, "I give life and cause death." Abraham said, "Indeed, Allāh brings up the sun from the east, so bring it up from the west." So the disbeliever was overwhelmed [by astonishment], and Allāh does not guide the wrongdoing people.”

To conclude, the foundation of polytheism in all people goes back to the worship of heavenly bodies and/or living things such as people. These living things were eventually represented as idols. The two points of evidence produced by the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him, highlights the falseness of other Gods. Allah, the Exalted, alone gives life and death and a created being that will eventually die cannot be regarded as divine either during life or death. Therefore, that living being has an All Powerful Lord Who controls all and He alone gives life and death. This eliminated the notion of worshipping idols that were representations of living beings, such as people. In addition, the heavenly bodies, the Sun being the biggest and the most powerful of them, also have a Lord and they are all controlled by Him. They have no control over themselves at all and it is their Lord and Creator who controls them, such as making the Sun rise from the East. The heavenly bodies are therefore not worthy of worship as they are slaves of Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, the only One worthy of worship and obedience is Allah, the Exalted.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 259

أَوۡ كَٱلَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَىٰ قَرۡيَةٖ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّىٰ يُحۡيِۦ هَٰذِهِ ٱللَّهُ بَعۡدَ مَوۡتِهَاۖ فَأَمَاتَهُ
ٱللَّهُ مِاْئَةَ عَامٖ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُۥۖ قَالَ كَمۡ لَبِثۡتَۖ قَالَ لَبِثۡتُ يَوۡمًا أَوۡ بَعۡضَ يَوۡمٖۖ قَالَ بَل لَّبِثۡتَ مِاْئَةَ
عَامٖ فَٱنظُرۡ إِلَىٰ طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمۡ يَتَسَنَّهۡۖ وَٱنظُرۡ إِلَىٰ حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجۡعَلَكَ
ءَايَةٗ لِّلنَّاسِۖ وَٱنظُرۡ إِلَى ٱلۡعِظَامِ كَيۡفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكۡسُوهَا لَحۡمٗاۚ فَلَمَّا
تَبَيَّنَ لَهُۥ قَالَ أَعۡلَمُ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ قَدِيرٞ ٢٥٩

“Or as the one who passed by a township which had fallen into ruin. He said, "How will Allah bring this to life after its death?" So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years; then He revived him. He said, "How long have you remained?" He [the man] said, "I have remained a day or part of a day." He said, "Rather, you have remained one hundred years. Look at your food and your drink; it has not changed with time. And look at your donkey; and We will make you a sign for the people. And look at the bones [of this donkey] - how We raise them and then We cover them with flesh." And when it became clear to him, he said, "I know that Allah is over all things competent."”

The first thing to note is that if the identity of this man was relevant to the lessons of this verse, Allah, the Exalted, would have mentioned his name. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 259:

"*Or as the one who passed by a township…"*

One must therefore avoid studying topics within religious knowledge which will not increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in Islamic teachings. A good way of judging whether a topic of religious knowledge is relevant or not is by assessing whether that is something Allah, the Exalted, will ask them about on Judgement Day. If they will not be questioned about a particular topic in Islam, such as the name of man discussed in this verse, then that topic is irrelevant and should be avoided. But if a topic will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of one's neighbour, then this topic must be researched, learned and acted upon to the best of one's potential.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 259:

"*Or as the one who passed by a township which had fallen into ruin. He said, "How will Allah bring this to life after its death?"…"*

This question was not necessarily rooted in doubt and was just a moment of reflection on something the man already believed in. An example of this is mentioned in the next verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 260:

“And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead." [Allāh] said, "Have you not believed?" He said, "Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied."…”

Therefore, the main verse under discussion indicates the importance of reflecting on the things which can aid one to strengthen their faith, such as history and the lives of other people, so that they increase their obedience to Allah, the Exalted, through strong faith. This obedience involves using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, a person should observe history and how those who were granted great power and wealth were destroyed when they persisted in the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and nothing but a few signs of them remain, such as the Egyptian empire. This reflection will encourage one to avoid making the same mistakes as them and to instead use the blessings they have been granted correctly. In addition, they will not waste their efforts on building a worldly empire, as history clearly shows, worldly empires often become a source of stress for people in this world and they will not aid people in the hereafter. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 137:

“Similar situations [as yours] have passed on before you, so proceed throughout the earth and observe how was the end of those who denied.”

Reflecting on the people of this time also leads to the strengthening of one’s faith. When one observes those who misuse the blessings they have been granted, such as wealth, and how it leads them to stress, depression and suicidal tendencies, even if they experience moments of fun, they will be convinced that obtaining peace of mind does not lie in worldly luxuries and living according to one’s desires. As a result, they will strive to use the blessings they have been granted correctly. When one observes those who behave like animals by abandoning all morality while claiming social freedom and how it leads to mental disorders, such as depression and substance abuse, they will realize true freedom, which always leads to peace of mind, does not lie in following their way of life. When one observes the advancements of scientific research in different areas, such as the physical and mental state of humans, they will understand that no matter how advanced the knowledge of society gets, they will never be able to produce a code of conduct which leads to a balanced mental and physical state, due to a lack of knowledge, experience, foresight and biases. On the other hand, as Allah, the Exalted, alone knows all things and only advises in order to benefit people, He alone can provide the perfect code of conduct which leads to a balanced mental and physical state and He alone can teach people how to place everything and everyone within their life in the correct place so that they achieve peace of mind. This becomes evident when one reflects on those who chose the right path in life. Finally, when one observes the perfect and countless balanced systems within the universe, such as the perfect distance of the Sun from the Earth, the water cycle, the density of the oceans which allow ships to sail on them while allowing sea life to thrive within them, and many more, they will observe the hand of a Creator. So many perfectly balanced systems cannot be the consequences of random events. In addition, if there were multiple Gods then it would lead to chaos as each God would desire something different within the universe. This is clearly not the

case and therefore indicates a single God, Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 21 Al Anbiya, verse 22:

“Had there been within them [i.e., the heavens and earth] gods besides Allah, they both would have been ruined…”

In addition, when one observes these perfectly balanced systems and others within the creation of the Heavens and the Earth they will notice one major thing which is not balanced, namely, the actions of people. The doer of good does not receive their full reward in this world and the evil doer does not receive their full punishment, even if they are punished by a government. It is logical to understand that the single Creator, Allah, the Exalted, who balanced all other systems within this universe will one day also balance the actions of people, the major imbalanced thing in this world. For this balancing of actions to occur, people’s actions must come to an end first. This is the Day of Judgement when the actions of people will be judged and balanced forever. This understanding will encourage on to practically prepare for their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This preparation involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly according to the teachings of Islam.

Therefore, people must take time out in order to reflect on the different things within their lives and in history so that they learn important lessons which will aid them in achieving the ultimate goal of peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 38 Sad, verse 29:

“[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 259:

“Or [consider such an example] as the one who passed by a township which had fallen into ruin. He said, "How will Allāh bring this to life after its death?" So Allāh caused him to die for a hundred years; then He revived him. He said, "How long have you remained?" He [the man] said, "I have remained a day or part of a day." He said, "Rather, you have remained one hundred years…”"

This indicates the reality of how fast time passes. Irrespective of a person’s age, belief, ethnicity or anything else, every person admits that time passes by extremely quickly. Time is the only worldly blessing that never returns after it passes. Therefore, one must appreciate this fact of time and make use of the time that they have been given before it runs out. One must not delay fulfilling their purpose in this world. This involves achieving peace of mind in both worlds by learning and acting on Islamic knowledge so that they use the blessings they have been granted correctly. Sadly, muslims have the habit of delaying fulfilling their purpose and instead prioritize secondary things, such as accumulating excessive wealth and amassing an empire which will only distract them further from fulfilling their purpose. Even though fulfilling one’s purpose involves obtaining worldly things, such as wealth, so that one fulfils their necessities and responsibilities, none the less, one must

still make time to learn and act on Islamic teachings so that they remain focused on their purpose in this world. Delaying this to a future date is foolish as one does not know how much time they have in this world. And as life goes by quickly, they will be left empty handed when their death arrives if they persist on delaying. A muslim must behave as if they are on a temporary work visa in this world. The one who is on a work visa fulfils their necessities and responsibilities but always prioritizes their purpose of gaining as much wealth as possible in order to return with it to their home country before their visa runs out, as this is the purpose of their work visa. Similarly, the aim of a person in this world is to achieve peace of mind in this world and prepare adequately for their accountability on the Day of Judgement. This is only achieved when they use the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings. The one who fails to utilize their time correctly will find that they misuse the blessings they have been granted and as a result they will not achieve peace of mind in this world nor will they prepare adequately for the Day of Judgement. As they are no second chances in the hereafter, a person must make use of their short time in this world before they are left empty handed and full of regrets in the hereafter.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 259:

“…So Allāh caused him to die for a hundred years; then He revived him. He said, "How long have you remained?" He [the man] said, "I have remained a day or part of a day." He said, "Rather, you have remained one hundred years. Look at your food and your drink; it has not changed with time. And look at your donkey; and We will make you a sign for the people…”

It is important to note that every sign granted by Allah, the Exalted, must be understood and acted upon according to its purpose. Sadly, many signs within Islam which have a specific purpose, such as reminding people of the Day of Judgement and therefore practically preparing for it, is often not understood according to its purpose and as a result the lesson behind the sign is not acted upon. Failing to understand the signs of Allah, the Exalted, correctly has been indicated in the Holy Quran. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verse 21:

“And similarly, We caused them to be found that they [who found them] would know that the promise of Allāh is truth and that of the Hour there is no doubt. [That was] when they disputed among themselves about their affair and [then] said, "Construct over them a structure. Their Lord is most knowing about them." Said those who prevailed in the matter, "We will surely take [for ourselves] over them a mosque."”

This refers to the people of the cave who Allah, the Exalted, caused to sleep for hundreds of years in order to teach people the important lesson of obeying Allah, the Exalted, and the protection one gains from doing so and the importance of remembering and practically preparing for the Day of Judgement. But the people in that time and many people after them failed to understand these points and instead turned the people of the cave into a tourist attraction whereby one can derive blessings from them by visiting their tombs and narrating their story.

Similarly, the entire Holy Quran are full of signs which indicate different realities people must understand and act upon yet many muslims have

turned the Holy Quran into a tool which fixes their worldly problems by reciting certain verses a specific amount of times without understanding or acting on the signs within them. Therefore, muslims must avoid behaving in this manner and instead strive to understand and act on the purpose of the signs granted by Allah, the Exalted, to mankind, so that they can derive benefit from them in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 259:

“…And look at the bones [of this donkey] - how We raise them and then We cover them with flesh." And when it became clear to him, he said, "I know that Allāh is over all things competent."”

Denying the possibility of humans being resurrected on the Day of Judgement is a strange claim when there are many examples of resurrection which occur throughout the days, months and years. For example, Allah, the Exalted, uses rain to give life to a dead barren land and causes a dead seed to burst forth alive in order to provide for the creation. Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, can and will give life to the dead seed named human, who is buried in the Earth, like the dead seed which sprouts to life. The changing of the seasons clearly show the resurrection. For example, during winter, the leaves of trees die and fall off and the tree appears lifeless. But during other seasons, the leaves grow once again and the tree appears full of life. The sleep wake cycle of all creatures is another example of resurrection. Sleep is the sister of death, as the senses of the sleeper are cut off. Allah, the Exalted, then returns a person’s soul to them if they are destined to live on

thereby giving life to the sleeping person once again. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 42:

“Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”

Reflecting on these examples and many more clearly indicate the possibility of the final resurrection on the Day of Judgement. And as discussed earlier, Judgement Day is required in order to balance the actions of people. As Allah, the Exalted, has power over all things giving life, death, resurrection and holding mankind accountable is easy for Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 259:

“…And when it became clear to him, he said, "I know that Allāh is over all things competent."”

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verse 260

وَإِذۡ قَالَ إِبۡرَٰهِـۧمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيۡفَ تُحۡيِ ٱلۡمَوۡتَىٰۖ قَالَ أَوَلَمۡ تُؤۡمِنۖ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطۡمَئِنَّ
قَلۡبِيۖ قَالَ فَخُذۡ أَرۡبَعَةٗ مِّنَ ٱلطَّيۡرِ فَصُرۡهُنَّ إِلَيۡكَ ثُمَّ ٱجۡعَلۡ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٖ مِّنۡهُنَّ جُزۡءٗا ثُمَّ
ٱدۡعُهُنَّ يَأۡتِينَكَ سَعۡيٗاۚ وَٱعۡلَمۡ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٞ ٢٦٠

“And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead." [Allah] said, "Have you not believed?" He said, "Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied." [Allah] said, "Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them; then call them - they will come [flying] to you in haste. And know that Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise."”

This verse begins indicating the importance of researching and learning topics which will strengthen one's faith, which in turn will increase one's obedience to Allah, the Exalted, so that one achieves peace of mind in both worlds. This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted correctly according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 260:

"*And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead." [Allah] said, "Have you not believed?" He said, "Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied."…"*

Therefore, one must avoid studying topics within religious knowledge which will not strengthen their faith nor increase their sincere obedience to Allah, the Exalted. A good way of judging whether a topic of religious knowledge is relevant or not is by assessing whether that is something Allah, the Exalted, will ask them about on Judgement Day. If they will not be questioned about a particular topic in Islam, such as specific events within Islamic history, then that topic is irrelevant and should be avoided. But if a topic will be questioned about on Judgement Day, such as fulfilling the rights of one's neighbour, then this topic must be researched, learned and acted upon to the best of one's potential.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 260:

"*And [mention] when Abraham said, "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead." [Allah] said, "Have you not believed?" He said, "Yes, but [I ask] only that my heart may be satisfied."…"*

This also indicates the importance of obtaining certainty of faith. This is achieved when one studies and acts on the clear proofs within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. These clear proofs also highlight the clear proofs placed within the creation which also aid one to strengthen their faith. Chapter 41 Fussilat, verse 53:

"We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth…"

The stronger one's faith, the more they will sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted correctly. This will ensure they obtain a balanced mental and physical state and it will ensure they place everything and everyone within their life correctly while preparing adequately for their accountability in the hereafter. All of this leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Allah, the Exalted, showed the process of resurrection to the Holy Prophet Ibrahim, peace be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 260:

“…[Allāh] said, "Take four birds and commit them to yourself. Then [after slaughtering them] put on each hill a portion of them; then call them - they will come [flying] to you in haste…””

Even though people will not witness a practical example of the resurrection in this way, none the less, the process of resurrection does occur regularly within the world and through them one can gain certainty in the final resurrection which will occur on the Day of Judgement. For example, Allah, the Exalted, uses rain to give life to a dead barren land and causes a dead seed to burst forth alive in order to provide for the creation. Similarly, Allah, the Exalted, can and will give life to the dead seed named human, who is buried in the Earth, like the dead seed which sprouts to life. The changing of the seasons clearly show the resurrection. For example, during winter, the leaves of trees die and fall off and the tree appears lifeless. But during other seasons, the leaves grow once again and the tree appears full of life. The sleep wake cycle of all creatures is another example of resurrection. Sleep is the sister of death, as the senses of the sleeper are cut off. Allah, the Exalted, then returns a person’s soul to them if they are destined to live on thereby giving life to the sleeping person once again. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 42:

“Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought.”

Reflecting on these examples and many more clearly indicate the possibility of the final resurrection on the Day of Judgement.

As Allah, the Exalted, is All Mighty and Wise, He can and will resurrect the dead in order to hold them accountable for their deeds in order to serve justice. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 260:

“…And know that Allāh is Exalted in Might and Wise."

Logically speaking, the Day of Judgement is something which must occur. If one observes the universe they will notice many examples of balance. For example, the Earth is at a perfect and balanced distance from the Sun. If the Earth was slightly closer or further away from the Sun it would not be inhabitable. Similarly, the water cycle, which involves the evaporation of water from the ocean into the atmosphere which is then condensed in order to produce rain, is perfectly balanced so that the creation can continue living on Earth. The ground was created in a balanced way so that the weak branches and shoots of seeds can penetrate through it in order to provide crops for the creation yet the same ground is tough enough to withstand

heavy buildings being built on top of it. There are many such examples that not only clearly indicate a Creator but also balance. But there is one major thing in this world which is clearly unbalanced namely, the actions of mankind. One often observes oppressive and tyrannical people who escape punishment in this world. Conversely, there are countless people who are oppressed by others and face other difficulties yet do not receive their full reward for their patience. Many Muslims who sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, often face many difficulties in this world and only receive a small share in reward whereas those who openly disobey Allah, the Exalted, enjoy the luxuries of this world and only face some problems. Just like Allah, the Exalted, has set up a balance in all His creations the reward and punishment of actions must also be balanced. But this obviously does not occur in this world so therefore it must occur in another time namely, the Day of Recompense.

Allah, the Exalted, could reward and punish fully in this world. But one of the wisdoms behind not fully punishing in this world is that Allah, the Exalted, gives opportunity after opportunity to them so that they sincerely repent and correct their behaviour. He does not fully reward Muslims in this world as this world is not Paradise. In addition, believing in the unseen namely, the full reward waiting for a Muslim in the next world, is an important aspect of faith. In fact belief in the unseen is what makes faith special. Believing in something which can be perceived through the five senses, such as receiving full reward in this world, would not be so special.

Having fear of full punishment and hope in receiving full reward in the hereafter will encourage one to abstain from sins and perform righteous deeds.

In order for the Day of Recompense to commence this material world must end. This is because punishment and reward can only be given once everyone's actions terminate. Therefore, the Day of Recompense cannot take place until the actions of people have been concluded. This indicates that the material world must end, sooner or later.

In addition, those who reject the resurrection find it hard to believe that after a corpse disintegrates and becomes scattered in different directions all over the world these particles will be brought back together again to form a human being. These people find it difficult to understand because they measure everybody on the scale of their own limited power and status and they do not deliberate on the infinite power of Allah, the Exalted.

A person only needs to reflect on their own being in order to believe in the resurrection. A person's existence is a collection of parts that contain elements that come from different parts of the world. The food and drink one consumes are in itself brought together from different parts of the world. The medicines one takes are composed of ingredients from different parts of the world. All these things gather together in one body even though they come from different parts of the world. If Allah, the Exalted, organizes this provision for a person so that they can survive in this world why is it difficult to accept that when their body, which is composed of elements nourished on things which came from different parts of the world, dies and becomes scattered dust and bones Allah, the Exalted, can bring these particles back together and recreate them.

When one reflects on this discussion it will strengthen their faith in the Day of Judgement thereby encouraging them to prepare for it by fulfilling the commands of Allah, the Exalted, refraining from His prohibitions and by facing destiny with patience according to the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 22:

"For Allah created the heavens and the earth for a purpose, so that every soul may be paid back for what it has committed. And none will be wronged."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 261-266

مَّثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنۢبَتَتۡ سَبۡعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُنۢبُلَةٖ
مِّاْئَةُ حَبَّةٖۗ وَٱللَّهُ يُضَٰعِفُ لِمَن يَشَآءُۚ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٢٦١

ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمۡوَٰلَهُمۡ فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتۡبِعُونَ مَآ أَنفَقُواْ مَنّٗا وَلَآ أَذٗى لَّهُمۡ أَجۡرُهُمۡ عِندَ
رَبِّهِمۡ وَلَا خَوۡفٌ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَلَا هُمۡ يَحۡزَنُونَ ٢٦٢

۞ قَوۡلٞ مَّعۡرُوفٞ وَمَغۡفِرَةٌ خَيۡرٞ مِّن صَدَقَةٖ يَتۡبَعُهَآ أَذٗىۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٞ ٢٦٣

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تُبۡطِلُواْ صَدَقَٰتِكُم بِٱلۡمَنِّ وَٱلۡأَذَىٰ كَٱلَّذِي يُنفِقُ مَالَهُۥ رِئَآءَ ٱلنَّاسِ وَلَا
يُؤۡمِنُ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۖ فَمَثَلُهُۥ كَمَثَلِ صَفۡوَانٍ عَلَيۡهِ تُرَابٞ فَأَصَابَهُۥ وَابِلٞ فَتَرَكَهُۥ صَلۡدٗاۖ
لَّا يَقۡدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيۡءٖ مِّمَّا كَسَبُواْۗ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يَهۡدِي ٱلۡقَوۡمَ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ ٢٦٤

وَمَثَلُ ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَٰلَهُمُ ٱبْتِغَآءَ مَرْضَاتِ ٱللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ
جَنَّةٍۭ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَـَٔاتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٥﴾

أَيَوَدُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ لَهُۥ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ لَهُۥ فِيهَا
مِن كُلِّ ٱلثَّمَرَٰتِ وَأَصَابَهُ ٱلْكِبَرُ وَلَهُۥ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضُعَفَآءُ فَأَصَابَهَآ إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَٱحْتَرَقَتْ
كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٦﴾

“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] injury will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.

Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. And Allah is Free of need and Forbearing.

O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury as does one who spends his wealth [only] to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day. His example is like that of a [large] smooth stone upon which is dust and is hit by a downpour that leaves it bare. They are unable [to keep] anything of what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.

And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking means to the approval of Allah and assuring themselves is like a garden on high ground

which is hit by a downpour - so it yields its fruits in double. And [even] if it is not hit by a downpour, then a drizzle [is sufficient]. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing.

Would one of you like to have a garden of palm trees and grapevines underneath which rivers flow in which he has from every fruit? But he is afflicted with old age and has weak [i.e., immature] offspring, and it is hit by a whirlwind containing fire and is burned. Thus does Allah make clear to you [His] verses that you might give thought."

Allah, the Exalted, discusses the importance of using the blessings He has granted people in the right way, according to Islamic teachings, so that they gain reward, blessings and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

"*The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah…"*

One must understand the difference between the blessings granted to them in this world and the blessings one receives in Paradise. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 43:

"…And they will be called, "This is Paradise, which you have been made to inherit for what you used to do.""

As indicated by this verse, a muslim will inherit Paradise, meaning, they will be given ownership of it as a gift. This is the reason why muslims will be free to do whatever they please in Paradise as they will be granted its ownership. Whereas, the blessings in this material world have been granted to people as a loan and not as a gift. A gift indicates ownership whereas a loan means the blessing must be returned to its true Owner namely, Allah, the Exalted. The only way to return the blessings of this material world which have been given as a loan to people is by using them in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This is in fact true gratitude and

leads to increase in blessings and mercy in both worlds. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

"…If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…"

The worldly blessings which have been granted to people as a loan must return to its true Owner, Allah, the Exalted, willingly or forcefully. If it is returned willingly then they will be blessed with much reward but if it is returned forcefully, such as through their death, then these blessings will become a burden for them in both this world and in the hereafter.

It is vital for muslims to understand the difference between a gift and a loan so that they are encouraged to use the blessings in this material world in the correct way.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

"*The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah…"*

The first thing to note is that a good intention is required in order to gain this reward. Intention is the inward foundation of Islam, just like earning and utilizing the lawful is the outward foundation of Islam. Both of these must be correct in order for one to obtain reward. As indicated by this verse, one must therefore ensure they act in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The one who acts for any other reason will not gain any reward. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A positive sign of a good intention is that one does not expect nor hope for any compensation or gratitude from people.

In addition, one must use the blessings they have been granted, such as wealth, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, in order to gain reward, blessings and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

"*The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes…"*

It is important to note that just like a plant grows slowly, the reward and blessings of a person reaches them according to the timetable of Allah, the Exalted, and not according to their own timetable. Sadly, many muslims who perform good actions expect immediate return, which is not always the case, as Allah, the Exalted, rewards and blesses people according to His timetable, which is best for them in both worlds. So a part of striving to obey Allah, the Exalted, is to remain patient when doing good deeds and not expect immediate blessings and reward. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

“…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not.”

Throughout Islamic teachings different amounts of reward have been declared for performing righteous deeds. Some teachings advise ten times reward, others seven hundred times and in some cases a reward which cannot be counted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

“The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills…”

This varying reward is dependent on one's sincerity. The more sincere a person is, the more they will be rewarded. Meaning, the more they perform the righteous deed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, the more they will be rewarded. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing. In addition, the more one uses the blessings they have been granted, such as wealth, on things which have been directly mentioned in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, may increase one’s reward also, such as spending wealth on orphans and widows.

One must therefore ensure they adopt a good intention, strive to be as sincere as possible and act according to the teachings of Islam, as Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their intention, speech and actions, and will compensate them accordingly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 261:

"…And Allāh is all-Encompassing and Knowing."

Just like a farmer who plants a crop must take constant care of it in order to reap benefits from it, similarly the one who does good deeds must guard them in order to earn their reward in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 262:

"Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh and then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] injury will have their reward with their Lord…"

One must avoid reminding others of the favours they have done them. Doing so is a clear proof of one's insincerity to Allah, the Exalted. In addition, a person must avoid using the good things they have done to others as a means to offend, embarrass or shame them, especially in front of others. Doing so is a sign of pride, as this person believes they have become

superior to the one they helped and as a result they belittle them. As discussed earlier, it is important to note that one should always remember that whatever blessings they possess, such as wealth, has been granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, as a loan and not as a gift. A loan must be repaid to its owner. The way one repays the loan granted to them by Allah, the Exalted, is by using them in ways pleasing to Him. Therefore, the one who aids the needy is only repaying the debt they owe Allah, the Exalted. When one remembers this it will prevent them from behaving as if they are doing a favor to Allah, the Exalted, or the needy person. In reality, Allah, the Exalted, favored them by granting them worldly blessings and by granting them an opportunity to gain countless reward by aiding the needy. In addition, the needy person has done the donor a favor by accepting their help. If every needy person rejected the aid of others then how will one obtain the reward mentioned in divine teachings? Remembering these points will prevent one from destroying their reward by adopting the incorrect intention and attitude.

The one who adopts the correct attitude and therefore strives to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings, will be blessed with peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 262:

"*Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah and then do not follow up what they have spent with reminders [of it] or [other] injury will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.*"

Peace of mind is only achieved in this manner, as Allah, the Exalted, alone has the knowledge to provide mankind with the perfect code of conduct to live by so that they achieve a balanced mental and physical state. In addition, He alone can teach a person how to place everything and everyone within their life in the correct place while preparing adequately for their accountability in the hereafter. All of these things lead to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

No matter how much knowledge people gain, they will never be able to design a code of conduct which leads to peace of mind due to a lack of knowledge, foresight and biases. Therefore, one must accept and act on Islamic teachings even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this patient will achieve good physical health, the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings will achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Even though, in most cases, patients do not understand the science behind the medicines they are prescribed and therefore blindly trust their doctor, Allah, the Exalted, invites people to reflect on the teachings of Islam so that they can appreciate its positive effects on their lives. He does not expect people to blindly trust the teachings of Islam and instead He wants them to recognize its truthfulness from its clear proofs. But this requires a person to adopt an unbiased and open mind when approaching the teachings of Islam. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….”"

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains it and who does not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And it is clear that Allah, the Exalted, will only give peace of mind to those who use the blessings He has granted them correctly.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 262:

“*…and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”*

It is important to note that this does not mean a person will not face stress and difficulties in this world, as this is inevitable and part of the test of living in this world. This verse refers to being granted peace of mind so that one is not overcome by the stress, anxiety and difficulties they face in this world. As a result, they will successfully journey through every situation, whether times of ease or difficulty, while having peace of mind and obtaining countless reward in both worlds. Chapter 39 Az Zumar, verse 10:

"…the patient will be given their reward without account [i.e., limit]."

Whereas, the person who fails to obey Allah, the Exalted, and as a result misuses the blessings they have been granted and misplaces the things and people within their lives will not achieve peace of mind. As a result, they will be overcome by every difficult situation they face, which in turn will increase their stress and anxiety until they fall deeper into mental health issues, such as depression, substance addiction and suicidal tendencies, even if they experience moments of fun. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Allah, the Exalted, then explains a reality which must be understood and acted upon. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 263:

"Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury…"

It is far better for a person to excuse themself from aiding another through kind speech, then insincerely aiding them whereby they expect some sort of gratitude or compensation from them instead of hoping for reward from Allah, the Exalted. A person must never behave in a rude way towards someone asking them for help. If they are not in a position to aid others, they should excuse themself in a kind manner and at least try to reassure the needy person that Allah, the Exalted, will aid them one way or another, as long as they remain patient. One does not need to be a scholar to gently advise this to another. In addition, one can also direct the needy person to someone else or an organization which may be able to help them. Behaving in this manner is a good deed, even if one cannot aid someone else in other ways, such as financial aid. As discussed earlier, it is important to note that when

one aids another, they are not doing Allah, the Exalted, or the needy person a favour, they are only benefiting themself. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 15:

“Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”

Allah, the Exalted, is completely free of need and independent of the creation and will aid the needy person through another means if a person fails to use the opportunity Allah, the Exalted, has granted them to obtain reward by helping the needy person, if they possess the means to do so. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 263:

“…And Allāh is Free of need…”

And chapter 11 Hud, verse 6:

"And there is no creature on earth but that upon Allāh is its provision, and He knows its place of dwelling and place of storage. All is in a clear register."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 263:

“…And Allāh is Free of need and Forbearing.”

It is vital for both the person being asked for help and the needy person to adopt forbearance. The person being asked for help should persist on aiding others according to their means for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, confident He will compensate them with much better than they spent. Chapter 34 Saba, verse 39:

“Say, "Indeed, my Lord extends provision for whom He wills of His servants and restricts [it] for him. But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] - He will compensate it; and He is the best of providers."”

If they are not in a position to aid another, then they must show forbearance towards a needy person which persists and criticizes them for not aiding them. A muslim must remember that their aim in life is to please Allah, the Exalted, not people. So if another criticizes them for failing to help a needy person, they must remain patient and not respond in a harsh manner.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 263:

"…And Allāh is Free of need and Forbearing."

The needy person needs to show forbearance by remaining patient during their difficulty while firmly believing that they role is to use the resources they have been granted, such as their physical strength, to solve any difficulty they are facing according to the teachings of Islam and then to patiently wait for relief from Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 94 Ash Sharh, verse 6:

"Indeed, with hardship [will be] ease."

In addition, they must remember that Allah, the Exalted, does not test a person with more than they can bear. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…"

Remembering these things will aid one to show forbearance in times of difficulty.

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Just like a fruit bearing tree is only useful when it produces fruit, similarly, faith is only useful when it produces good actions. In this case, Allah, the Exalted, reminds muslims to adopt the correct intention in all their actions, especially when they are aiding others. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

"O you who have believed, do not invalidate your charities with reminders [of it] or injury as does one who spends his wealth [only] to be seen by the people and does not believe in Allāh and the Last Day…"

As discussed earlier, reminding others of the favours one has done them or harming them in anyway, such as embarrassing them, are clear signs that they did not act for the sake of pleasing Allah, the Exalted. Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that the one who does good things in order to please people is just like the one who does not believe in Allah, the Exalted, and their recompense on Judgement Day. As a result, this person only acts to please people as they have no other goal to aim for, such as pleasing Allah, the Exalted, or preparing for Judgement Day. Therefore, it is vital for a muslim to avoid the attitude of doing good things for other than Allah, the Exalted, as it is a clear sign that they do not truly believe in Allah, the Exalted, or their accountability on Judgement Day, even if they verbally claim otherwise. Meaning, the one who has the right attitude will only act in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and to practically prepare for their accountability on Judgement Day.

Allah, the Exalted, then emphasizes the loss of adopting a bad intention. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

"…His example is like that of a [large] smooth stone upon which is dust and is hit by a downpour that leaves it bare. They are unable [to keep] anything of what they have earned…"

This means that the one who adopts a bad intention, which involves doing something good for any reason other than to please Allah, the Exalted, will waste their efforts and reward and they will be left with nothing in both worlds. As a result, this person will not enjoy the resources they were granted in this world nor will they gain any reward from using them in the right way because of their bad intention. This is a great loss. This person was better off using the resources they were granted in other lawful ways which were pleasing to them then using them on good things, such as charity, with a bad intention. In addition, as a result of their bad intention to please people, Allah, the Exalted, will eventually reveal their insincerity to others which will lead to people losing respect and love for them. And whatever good they done with a bad intention will also easily be forgotten by people, as Allah, the Exalted, does not let insincere deeds remain alive in the hearts of people for long. This is quite obvious if one reflects on history and how He kept the sincere deeds of people alive, while the insincere deeds of people were quickly forgotten, even if they were bigger deeds, such as building a hospital. And as people are generally ungrateful, they will not truly appreciate the efforts of the person who does good things in order to please them. This will only cause the person to become bitter and sad. This will further prevent them

from obtaining peace of mind. Therefore, adopting a bad intention only leads to wasting one's energy, time, resources and reward in both worlds. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

“Say, "Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work."

As warned in verse 264, the one who adopts a bad intention does not truly believe in Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability on Judgement Day, and as a result this person will not be guided to peace of mind through every situation they face in this world. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 264:

“…And Allāh does not guide the disbelieving people.”

This is a warning to the one who adopts a bad intention when doing good things, even if they claim to be a muslim. Faith is like a plant which must be nourished with good deeds which are founded on good intentions. Just like a plant which fails to obtain nourishment, such as water, will die, so may well the faith of a person who fails to nourish their faith with good actions which are founded on good intentions.

Allah, the Exalted, then explains the benefit of using the blessings one has been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings, with the right intention, which is to please Him and prepare adequately for the Day of Judgement. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 265:

“And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking means to the approval of Allāh and assuring themselves…”

Assuring themselves indicates that as this person adopts the correct intention they firmly believe in Allah, the Exalted, and their accountability on the Day of Judgement. Meaning, adopting the correct intention is a sign of their firm faith. One must therefore strive to obtain certainty of faith as it will aid them in correcting their intention, speech and actions at all times. Certainty of faith is achieved when one learns and acts on the clear proofs of Islam discussed within the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The stronger one’s faith, the more they will sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, and prepare for their accountability on Judgement Day. This involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly as outlined in Islamic teachings. This leads to a balanced mental and physical state and aids one in placing everything and everyone within their life correctly. This leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, remaining ignorant of Islamic teachings will only encourage one to adopt the incorrect intention and to misuse the blessings they have been granted. This leads to an imbalanced mental and physical state and causes one to misplace everything and everyone within their life. This in turn prevents one from obtaining peace of mind in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 265:

"And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking means to the approval of Allāh and assuring [reward for] themselves is like a garden on high ground which is hit by a downpour - so it yields its fruits in double. And [even] if it is not hit by a downpour, then a drizzle [is sufficient]…"

The double mentioned in this verse could be referring to the reward, mercy and peace of mind one obtains in both worlds when they act in the right way with the correct intention. In addition, as discussed earlier, the more sincere one's intention, the more reward they will obtain. For example, the one who only acts to please Allah, the Exalted, without desiring a lawful worldly blessing will obtain more reward than the one who acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted, and seeks a lawful worldly blessing.

This set of verses concludes with Allah, the Exalted, reminding people that as He observes their intention and actions, He will compensate them accordingly in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 265:

"…And Allāh, of what you do, is Seeing."

Therefore, one must ensure they correct their intention, speech and actions at all times, otherwise their efforts, time and reward will be wasted in both worlds.

Allah, the Exalted, summarizes the teachings of the main verses under discussion with a parable. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 266:

"Would one of you like to have a garden of palm trees and grapevines underneath which rivers flow in which he has from every fruit? But he is afflicted with old age and has weak [i.e., immature] offspring, and it is hit by a whirlwind containing fire and is burned…"

This parable could mean that when one performs insincere deeds, all their efforts, worldly achievements, resources and reward are wasted and they do not benefit them in their moment of need, such as during a worldly difficulty,

at the time of death, in one’s grave or on Judgement Day. Chapter 18 Al Kahf, verses 103-104:

“Say, "Shall we [believers] inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? [They are] those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work."

And chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 23:

“And We will approach what they have done of deeds and make them as dust dispersed.”

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 266:

“Would one of you like to have a garden of palm trees and grapevines underneath which rivers flow in which he has from every fruit? But he is afflicted with old age and has weak [i.e., immature] offspring, and it is hit by a whirlwind containing fire and is burned…”

As the main verses encourage one to use the blessings they have been granted correctly according to the teachings of Islam so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds, this parable could also refer to the one who misuses the blessings they have been granted on vain and sinful things and their attitude causes them to misplace everything and everyone within their life while failing to prepare adequately for Judgement Day. As a result of their attitude, everything within their life, such as their relatives, become a source of stress, anxiety and trouble for them, because they have been misused and misplaced within their life. This person does not achieve peace of mind in this world, even if they possess many worldly things, such as wealth. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

And in their moment of need, such as facing a worldly difficulty, none of their possessions give them the emotional support they need to overcome the difficulty. And when they reach the hereafter for their accountability, as they did not practically prepare for it, they will be left empty handed, just like the old man in the parable.

Therefore, one must ensure they avoid these outcomes by sincerely using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings so that they achieve a balanced mental and physical state and place everything and everyone within their life correctly while practically preparing for their accountability in the hereafter. This leads to peace of mind in both worlds. But as indicated by the end of verse 266, only those who

reflect on the teachings of Islam with an open mind will benefit from them. Whereas, those who ignore Islamic teachings or recite the Holy Quran in a language they do not understand will not benefit from its teachings and lessons as they will not be able to reflect on its teachings nor apply them into their lives. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 266:

"…*Thus does Allah make clear to you [His] verses that you might give thought."*

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 267-274

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَنفِقُوا۟ مِن طَيِّبَٰتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّآ أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُم مِّنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَا
تَيَمَّمُوا۟ ٱلْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُم بِـَٔاخِذِيهِ إِلَّآ أَن تُغْمِضُوا۟ فِيهِ ۚ وَٱعْلَمُوٓا۟ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَنِىٌّ
حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢٦٧﴾

ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ يَعِدُكُمُ ٱلْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِٱلْفَحْشَآءِ ۖ وَٱللَّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلًا ۗ
وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾

يُؤْتِى ٱلْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَمَن يُؤْتَ ٱلْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِىَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ۗ وَمَا
يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّآ أُو۟لُوا۟ ٱلْأَلْبَٰبِ ﴿٢٦٩﴾

وَمَآ أَنفَقْتُم مِّن نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُم مِّن نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُۥ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ
أَنصَارٍ ﴿٢٧٠﴾

إِن تُبْدُوا۟ ٱلصَّدَقَٰتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِىَ ۖ وَإِن تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا ٱلْفُقَرَآءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ
وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنكُم مِّن سَيِّـَٔاتِكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٧١﴾

۞ لَّيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَىٰهُمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ ۗ وَمَا تُنفِقُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ
فَلِأَنفُسِكُمْ ۚ وَمَا تُنفِقُونَ إِلَّا ٱبْتِغَآءَ وَجْهِ ٱللَّهِ ۚ وَمَا تُنفِقُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفَّ
إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٢﴾

لِلْفُقَرَآءِ ٱلَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِى
ٱلْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ ٱلْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَآءَ مِنَ ٱلتَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُم بِسِيمَٰهُمْ لَا
يَسْـَٔلُونَ ٱلنَّاسَ إِلْحَافًا ۗ وَمَا تُنفِقُوا۟ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِهِۦ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٣﴾

ٱلَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَٰلَهُم بِٱلَّيْلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ
رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٤﴾

“O you who have believed, spend from the good things which you have earned and from that which We have produced for you from the earth. And do not aim toward the defective therefrom, spending [from that] while you would not take it [yourself] except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy.

Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality, while Allah promises you forgiveness from Him and bounty. And Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing.

He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good. And none will remember except those of understanding.

And whatever you spend of expenditures or make of vows - indeed, Allah knows of it. And for the wrongdoers there are no helpers.

If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you, and He will remove from you some of your misdeeds [thereby]. And Allah, of what you do, is [fully] Aware.

Not upon you is [responsibility for] their guidance, but Allah guides whom He wills. And whatever good you [believers] spend is for yourselves, and

you do not spend except seeking the face [i.e., approval] of Allah. And whatever you spend of good - it will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged.

[Charity is] for the poor who have been restricted for the cause of Allah, unable to move about in the land. An ignorant [person] would think them self-sufficient because of their restraint, but you will know them by their [characteristic] sign. They do not ask people persistently [or at all]. And whatever you spend of good - indeed, Allah is Knowing of it.

Those who spend their wealth [in Allah's way] by night and by day, secretly and publicly - they will have their reward with their Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve."

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Just like a fruit bearing tree is only useful when it produces fruit, similarly, faith is only useful when it produces good actions. In this case, Allah, the Exalted, encourages muslims to use the blessings He has granted them correctly, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 267:

"O you who have believed, spend from the good things which you have earned and from that which We have produced for you from the earth…"

When a Muslim truly believes that everything they possess belongs to Allah, the Exalted, then using the blessings they possess correctly, such as giving charity, through the grace of Allah, the Exalted, becomes easy. One who adopts this attitude realizes they are simply returning a loan that was given to them by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 254:

"O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you…"

This behaviour also protects one from destroying their good deed of charity through pride. Pride makes a person believe they are doing Allah, the Exalted, and the needy a favor by donating charity. But the same way one returns a bank loan without pride Muslims need to realize their charity is a way of repaying the loan given by Allah, the Exalted. In addition, the needy are doing the donor a favor by taking their charity. The needy are a means for them to obtain reward from Allah, the Exalted, and without them this would be impossible. If one believes that their wealth was accumulated through their intelligence and strength they must understand that these things were also given by Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, this loan in the form of blessings such as wealth must be returned to Allah, the Exalted, otherwise they may face a penalty that will begin in this world and continue into the hereafter.

When one donates charity their transaction is not with a needy person in fact it is with Allah, the Exalted. When a person sincerely does business with Allah, the Exalted, they can be confident of an unimaginable profit which will benefit them in this world and in the next. This has been indicated in the main verses under discussion. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 245:

"Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?..."

Allah, the Exalted, then explains a universal principle through a specific example. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 267:

"…And do not aim toward the defective therefrom, spending [from that] while you would not take it [yourself] except with closed eyes…"

In all aspects of one's life, a person must treat others in a way they themself desire to be treated by other people. This is in fact the very definition of a believer according to the Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 13. The one who behaves in this manner will fulfil the rights of people according to Islamic teachings, which includes aiding them according to one's means, such as financial, emotional and physical support.

Allah, the Exalted, concludes verse 267 by reminding people that using the blessings they have been granted correctly, such as aiding others, only benefits themselves, as Allah, the Exalted, is Independent and Free of need and can easily aid a needy person through another means if a person fails to take advantage of the opportunity to earn reward they have been given by aiding the needy person. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 267:

"…And know that Allāh is Free of need…"

And chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 15:

“Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”

In addition, as discussed earlier, one must never forget that the inspiration, opportunity, knowledge and ability to do a good deed all come from Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, one must not praise themself when doing good deeds, such as aiding others, they must instead concentrate fully on praising Allah, the Exalted, the One who enabled them to do good so that they can gain reward and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 267:

“…And know that Allāh is Free of need and Praiseworthy.”

Allah, the Exalted, then warns people not to be influenced by the tools of the Devil, such as some aspects of social media, fashion and culture, into misusing the blessings they have been granted out of fear. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 268:

“Satan threatens you with poverty…”

This poverty can take many different forms, such as being financially poor. A person can fear being socially poor. Their fear of becoming unpopular

amongst the people in their life, such as school students and work colleagues, encourages them to misuse the blessings they have been granted. A person can fear emotional poverty, whereby they fear that if they use the blessings they have been granted correctly then they would lose out on fulfilling their desires, which in turn would prevent them from happiness and peace of mind. As a result of these and other fears, a person is encouraged into misusing the blessings they have been granted which leads them to vain and sinful things. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 268:

"Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality…"

But a person must always remember that as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls all things, He can and will protect a person from the negative effects of all these fears, as long as they remain obedient to Him by using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 268:

"Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality, while Allāh promises you forgiveness from Him and bounty. And Allāh is all-Encompassing…"

The one thing which can overcome all of these fears and their negative effects is peace of mind. Whereas, a lack of peace of mind will cause one to live a fearful life, even if they fulfil all their desires. The one who lives in fear

of these different types of poverty, is not actually living, even if it appears so. Therefore, one must strive to achieve peace of mind in order to protect themself from these fears and their negative consequences. This is only achieved when one obeys Allah, the Exalted, and uses the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings. This will allow one to achieve a balanced mental and physical state and place everything and everyone within their life correctly, while preparing adequately for their accountability in the hereafter. All of this leads to peace of mind, which in turn would protect a person from the fears discussed earlier and their negative consequences. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 268:

"Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality, while Allāh promises you forgiveness from Him and bounty. And Allāh is all-Encompassing…"

Therefore, a person must accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake, even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings. This is because the only One who has the knowledge required to ensure a person achieves a balanced mental and physical state is Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the mental and physical states of humans possessed by society will never be enough to achieve this outcome, despite all the research that has been undertaken, as they cannot solve every issue a person can face within their life nor can their advice cause one to avoid all types of mental and physical stress due to limited knowledge, experience and foresight. Allah, the Exalted, alone has this knowledge and He has granted

it to mankind in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 268:

“…And Allāh is all-Encompassing and Knowing.”

This truth is obvious when one observes those who use the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings and those who do not. Even though, in most cases, patients do not understand the science behind the medicines they are prescribed and therefore blindly trust their doctor, Allah, the Exalted, invites people to reflect on the teachings of Islam so that they can appreciate its positive effects on their lives. He does not expect people to blindly trust the teachings of Islam and instead He wants them to recognize its truthfulness from its clear proofs. But this requires a person to adopt an unbiased and open mind when approaching the teachings of Islam. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….””

In addition, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains it and who does not. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 43:

“And that it is He who makes [one] laugh and weep.”

And it is clear that Allah, the Exalted, will only give peace of mind to those who use the blessings He has granted them correctly.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 268:

“Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you to immorality, while Allāh promises you forgiveness from Him and bounty. And Allāh is all-Encompassing…”

This verse also differentiates between having hope in the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking is when one persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, while expecting mercy, forgiveness and blessings from Him. This has no value in Islam, as this person is obeying the Devil. Whereas, real hope in Allah, the Exalted, is when one strives in His obedience, by using the blessings He has granted them correctly, according to Islamic teachings and then hoping in His mercy. Being perfect in this behaviour is not a condition of hoping in Allah, the Exalted. But a person must strive to sincerely repent whenever they happen to commit a sin. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same

or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 269:

“He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good…”

Wisdom is when one uses their knowledge correctly so that it benefits them and others in both worlds. It is important to note that in most cases, knowledge by itself is neither good or bad. Knowledge can become a source of good when it is used correctly. Whereas, knowledge can become a source of evil when it is misused. For example, scientific knowledge when used correctly leads to medicines and other benefits. Whereas, scientific knowledge which is misused leads to the manufacture of weapons and other dangerous things. It is wisdom that encourages one to use the knowledge they possess correctly. And this wisdom is derived from Islamic teachings, as it teaches a person how to use the blessings they have been granted, such as their knowledge, correctly and teaches them to correctly place everything and everyone within their life so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. But as indicated by the end of verse 269, only those who approach Islamic teachings with an open and unbiased mind will appreciate its wisdoms and ability to guide people to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 269:

“…And none will remember except those of understanding.”

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that even if a person forgets when they used the blessings He granted them correctly or this behaviour is criticized by society, Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of their intention, speech and actions and will compensate them accordingly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 270:

“And whatever you spend of expenditures or make of vows - indeed, Allāh knows of it…”

A person must therefore not be concerned by the attitude and criticism of people and instead sincerely strive to use the blessings they have been granted correctly so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But those who misuse the blessings they have been granted will not obtain peace of mind, as they will not achieve a balanced mental and physical state

and as they will misplace everything and everyone within their life. As a result, they will obtain nothing but mental health issues, such as depression, substance addiction and suicidal thoughts, even if they experience moments of fun, and none of their worldly possessions or relationships will be able to prevent this outcome. This end is quite obvious when one observes the rich and famous. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 270:

"…And for the wrongdoers there are no helpers."

And chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

"So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn."

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 270:

“And whatever you spend of expenditures or make of vows - indeed, Allāh knows of it…”

Generally speaking, a vow is when someone promises to do a specific good deed if they obtain something lawful they desire. Even though, this is not unlawful in Islam, none the less, it should be avoided as much as possible as a person can easily adopt a mentality whereby they behave as if their good deeds are valuable to Allah, the Exalted, and they will only do them when they are given the worldly things they desire. Allah, the Exalted, is independent of the entire creation and needs nothing from anyone. A person’s deeds only benefits themself whereas Allah, the Exalted, gains no benefit from them and neither do other people. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 15:

“Whoever does a good deed - it is for himself; and whoever does evil - it is against it [i.e., the soul]. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”

Allah, the Exalted, then discusses the importance of public and private good deeds, such as charity. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 271:

“If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good; but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you…”

In both cases, for a good deed to be accepted by Allah, the Exalted, one must adopt a good intention, which is to please Allah, the Exalted, and the good deed must be done according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who acts to please other than Allah, the Exalted, will not gain any reward. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154.

Public good deeds can be done in order to encourage others to do the same. A person will gain the same reward earned by the one who acts on their encouragement. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2674. Chapter 4 An Nisa, verse 85:

“Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a share [i.e., reward] therefrom; and whoever intercedes for an evil cause will have a portion [i.e., burden] therefrom. And ever is Allāh, over all things, a Keeper.”

It is important to note that the one who encourages others to do something bad will earn the same punishment as the one who acts on their bad advice. Therefore, one must only advise others to do good things.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 271:

“If you disclose your charitable expenditures, they are good…”

But those who fear they will corrupt their intention by publicizing their good deed, should conceal them as much as possible. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 271:

“…but if you conceal them and give them to the poor, it is better for you…”

In addition, in the case where one is doing another a favour, such as aiding them financially, it is better to conceal their good deed, in order to prevent the needy person from becoming publicly embarrassed. Public embarrassment can encourage a needy person from refusing to accept the help of another.

Either way, one must maintain a good intention and act according to Islamic teachings so that they do not destroy their reward, such as reminding the needy person of the favour they did them. As a result, Allah, the Exalted, will erase some of their sins because of these good deeds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 271:

"…and He will remove from you some of your misdeeds…"

And chapter 11 Hud, verse 114:

"…Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds. That is a reminder for those who remember."

Minor sins can be erased through good deeds, whereas, major sins require sincere repentance to be erased. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

Generally speaking, sins have been classified as minor and major within Islam. Over time many definitions have been given regarding what exactly a major sin is. One simple classification is that any sin which Islam has commanded the Islamic government to punish is classed as a major sin. Another classification is that if any sin is mentioned with Hellfire, the anger of Allah, the Exalted, or the curse of Allah, the Exalted, then it is a major sin. Belittling sins or persisting on them can also make them major sins. The exact definition was not revealed to mankind so that they strive to avoid all sins out of fear it may be a major sin.

As Allah, the Exalted, is fully aware of all things, a person must ensure they correct their intention, speech and actions in all their activities so that they gain reward and blessings in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 271:

"…And Allāh, of what you do, is [fully] Aware."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 272:

"Not upon you is [responsibility for] their guidance, but Allāh guides whom He wills..."

The Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, initially hesitated from helping their non-Muslim relatives or other non-Muslims who were in need. They thought that only helping Muslims would lead to the pleasure of Allah, the Exalted, and reward. In addition, some thought if they restricted giving charity to believers only, then the non-Muslims would be more inclined to accept faith so that they could receive charity also. This verse corrected their attitude. The purpose of this verse is to point out that Muslims are not responsible for forcing true guidance on people. Conveying the message of Islam to people through their actions absolves them of the obligation incumbent upon them. It is then up to people whether they desire to follow the truth or not. Whoever follows the truth, will be aided by Allah, the Exalted, in understanding and acting on the teachings of Islam. Whereas, the one who decides to reject the truth, will be allowed to continue on the path they have chosen, as Allah, the Exalted, does not force guidance on anyone. In addition, Muslims should not refrain from helping people in the affairs of the world just because they are not following true guidance. They will be rewarded by Allah, the Exalted, for whatever help they render to needy people as long as they do it for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 2, Page 63. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 272:

"…And whatever good you [believers] spend is for yourselves, and you do not spend except seeking the face [i.e., approval] of Allāh…"

As discussed earlier, a person only favours themself when they do good deeds, as Allah, the Exalted, is in no need of their good deeds. In addition, a needy person has done the donor a favour by accepting their aid. If the needy person refused to accept their help, then how would the donor gain reward from Allah, the Exalted? Therefore, a person must never forget that

every good deed they do is for their own sake, as it leads them to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 272:

"…And whatever you spend of good - it will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged."

This compensation comes in the form of peace of mind as well as other blessings and opportunities, such as financial opportunities, which all aim to increase a person's peace of mind, as long as they continue to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings.

Allah, the Exalted, then indicates the importance of avoiding being self-absorbed whereby one is only concerned about themself and their issues and as a result they fail to pay attention to the people around them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 273:

"[Charity is] for the poor who have been restricted for the cause of Allāh, unable to move about in the land. An ignorant [person] would think them self-sufficient because of their restraint, but you will know them by their [characteristic] sign. They do not ask people persistently [or at all]…"

Most people in need do not advertise nor beg for aid from others. Therefore, muslims are encouraged to get to know members of their community so that they are comfortable to inform each other of the difficulties they are facing thereby indicating they require assistance. This is one of the reasons why offering the obligatory prayers with the congregation at a Mosque is emphasized in Islamic teachings. This allows muslims to connect to others and through these connections to aid others who do not make their need obvious. In addition, these connections also allows one to direct the needy person to another who well be in a better position to aid them. For example, someone looking for a job can be linked to a member of the community who is looking for an employee.

In addition, this verse also indicates the importance of seeking help from others only when it is necessary. A person must first strive to use all the resources they have been granted, such as their physical strength, before they ask others for help. Persisting on asking others for help causes one to become more dependent on people and less dependent on Allah, the Exalted, and should therefore be avoided. In addition, the one who persists on asking others for aid can also lose their self-respect and dignity, which often leads to other sins.

Allah, the Exalted, then reemphasizes that He is fully aware of the intention, speech and actions of a person and will compensate them accordingly. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 274:

“…And whatever you spend of good - indeed, Allāh is Knowing of it.”

Therefore, a person must correct their intention, speech and actions and strive to do as much good as possible so that they obtain peace of mind and reward in both worlds. As this good involves using the blessings one has been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings, no one can excuse themself from doing good, as everyone has been granted some worldly blessings.

Allah, the Exalted, then summarizes the different ways a person should be using the blessings they have been granted correctly, such as their wealth. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 274:

"Those who spend their wealth [in Allāh's way] by night and by day, secretly and publicly - they will have their reward with their Lord…"

One should not pick and choose when to use the blessings they have been granted correctly and instead do it in every situation they face. Islam is a way of life and must influence every situation a person faces. Islam must never be treated like a coat which can be worn and taken off according to one's desires. The one who behaves in this manner is not obeying Allah, the Exalted, they are only worshipping their own desires. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

“Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?...”

One must therefore avoid this attitude by striving to use the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings, in every situation, throughout their days and nights. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 274:

“Those who spend their wealth [in Allāh's way] by night and by day, secretly and publicly - they will have their reward with their Lord…”

As discussed earlier, as long as one’s intention is to please Allah, the Exalted, and their speech and actions are according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, they can perform good deeds openly, in order to encourage other people, or secretly, in order to avoid corrupting their intention. Either way, they will receive their reward in both worlds. As discussed earlier in detail, an aspect of this reward is achieving the invaluable blessing of peace of mind in both worlds. When one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings, it will lead them to a balanced mental and physical state and aid them in correctly placing everyone and everything within their life while preparing adequately for their accountability in the hereafter. As a result, this person will achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 274:

“…And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

A person will still face stress and difficulties in this world, as this is a part of the test of living in this world. But their peace of mind will overcome these difficulties so that they obtain reward, blessings and more peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

It is important to bear in mind that as Allah, the Exalted, alone knows all things, including the mental and physical state of humans, He alone can provide the perfect code of conduct which leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Whereas, the code of conduct provided by society will never lead to peace of mind due to the deficiency in their knowledge, experience and because of their intentional and unintentional biases. Therefore, one must act as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan.

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 275-281

ٱلَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ ٱلرِّبَوٰا۟ لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ ٱلَّذِى يَتَخَبَّطُهُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ مِنَ ٱلْمَسِّ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنَّمَا ٱلْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ ٱلرِّبَوٰا۟ وَأَحَلَّ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ ٱلرِّبَوٰا۟ فَمَن جَآءَهُۥ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِۦ فَٱنتَهَىٰ فَلَهُۥ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُۥٓ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٢٧٥﴾

يَمْحَقُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلرِّبَوٰا۟ وَيُرْبِى ٱلصَّدَقَٰتِ وَٱللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٧٦﴾

إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَأَقَامُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَوُا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٧﴾

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَذَرُوا۟ مَا بَقِىَ مِنَ ٱلرِّبَوٰٓا۟ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧٨﴾

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا۟ فَأْذَنُوا۟ بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَٰلِكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾

وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَن تَصَدَّقُوا۟ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨٠﴾

وَٱتَّقُوا۟ يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

“Those who consume interest cannot stand except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity. That is because they say, "Trade is [just] like interest." But Allah has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allah. But whoever returns [to dealing in interest or usury] - those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.

Allah destroys interest and gives increase for charities. And Allah does not like every ungrateful sinner.

Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds and establish prayer and give zakāh will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.

O you who have believed, fear Allah and give up what remains [due to you] of interest, if you should be believers.

And if you do not, then be informed of a war [against you] from Allah and His Messenger. But if you repent, you may have your principal - [thus] you do no wrong, nor are you wronged.

And if someone is in hardship, then [let there be] postponement [of a debt] until [a time of] ease. But if you give [from your right as] charity, then it is better for you, if you only knew.

And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged.”

Financial interest denotes the amount that a lender receives from a borrower at a fixed rate of interest. At the time of the revelation of the Holy Quran many forms of interest transactions were practiced. Of these one was that the vendor sold an article and fixed a time limit for the payment of the price, stipulating that if the buyer failed to pay within the specified period of time they would extend the time limit but increase the price of the article. Another was that a person loaned a sum of money to another person and stipulated that the borrower should return a specified amount in excess of the amount loaned within a given time limit. A third form of interest transaction was that the borrower and vendor agreed that the former would repay the loan within a certain limit at a fixed rate of interest, and that if they failed to do so within the limit the lender would extend the time limit but at the same time would increase the rate of interest. It is transactions such as these that the injunctions mentioned here apply.

Those who believe this fail to differentiate between the profit gained from lawful investment and financial interest. As a result of this confusion some argue that if profit on money invested in a business is lawful why should the profit made from a loan be deemed unlawful? They argue that instead of a person investing their wealth they loan it to somebody who in turn makes a profit out of it. In such circumstances why should the borrower not pay the lender a part of the profit? They fail to recognize that no business venture is immune from risk. No venture carries an absolute guarantee of profit. Therefore, it is not fair that the financier alone should be considered entitled to a profit at a fixed rate in all circumstances and should be protected against any chance of loss. It is not a part of justice that those who dedicate their resources are not guaranteed profit at any fixed rate whereas those who lend their wealth are fully secured against all risks of loss and are guaranteed profit at a fixed rate.

In a normal lawful transaction a buyer derives benefit from an item which they purchase from a seller. The seller receives compensation for the effort and time spent on making the item. In interest-related transactions on the other hand, exchange of benefits does not take place equitably. The interest receiving party receives a fixed amount as a payment for the loan they gave and thus their gain is secured. The other party can make use of the funds loaned but it may not always yield a profit. If such a person spends the borrowed funds on a need there will be no profit. Even if the funds are invested then one stands the chance of both making a profit or incurring a loss. Hence an interest-related transaction causes either a loss on one side and a profit on the other or an assured and fixed profit on one side and an uncertain profit on the other. Therefore, lawful trade is not equal to financial interest.

In addition, the burden of interest makes it extremely difficult for borrowers to repay the loan. They may even have to borrow from another source in order to pay off the original loan and interest. Because of the way interest works the sum outstanding against them often remains even after they have repaid the loan. This financial pressure can prevent people obtaining the necessities of life for themselves and their families. This stress can lead to many physical and mental problems.

Ultimately, in this type of system only the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

Even though dealing with financial interest may outwardly seem that a person gains wealth but in reality it only causes an overall loss to them. This

loss can take many forms. For example, it may lead them to losing good and lawful business dealings they could have obtained if they refrained from dealing with financial interest. Allah, the Exalted, may cause them to use their wealth in ways which do not please them. For example, they may encounter physical ailments which causes them to spend their precious unlawful wealth thereby failing to use it in ways pleasing to them. The overall loss has a spiritual aspect also. The more they deal with financial interest the greater their greed becomes meaning, their greed for worldly things is never satisfied which by definition makes them poor even if they possess much wealth. These people will go from one worldly issue to another throughout the day failing to achieve contentment as they lost the grace which accompanies lawful business and wealth. This may even push them towards gaining more unlawful wealth through financial interest and other means. The loss in the hereafter is more obvious. They will be left empty handed on the Day of Judgement as no good deed which is rooted in the unlawful, such as giving charity with unlawful wealth, is accepted by Allah, the Exalted. It does not take a scholar to determine where this person is likely to end up on Judgement Day.

There is a huge difference between lawful business transactions and interest-related transactions. The former plays a beneficial role in society whereas the latter leads to its decline. By its very nature interest breeds greed, selfishness, apathy and cruelty towards others. It leads to the worship of wealth and destroys compassion and unity with others. Thus it can ruin society from both an economic and a moral viewpoint.

Charity, on the other hand, is the outcome of generosity and compassion. Due to mutual co-operation and goodwill the society will develop positively which in turn benefits everyone. It is obvious that if there is a society whose

individuals are selfish in their dealings with one another, in which the interests of the rich are directly opposed to the interests of the common people, that society does not rest on stable foundations. In such a society, instead of love and compassion there is bound to grow mutual spite and bitterness.

To conclude, when people fulfil their own needs and the needs of their dependents and then spend in charitable ways with their surplus wealth or take part in mutually lawful business ventures then the trade, industry, and agriculture in such a society will improve. The standard of living within the society will rise and production in it will be much higher than in societies where economic activity is constricted by financial interest.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 275:

“Those who consume interest cannot stand except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity…”

This warns that dealing with unlawful means of obtaining wealth, such as financial interest, only encourages one to adopt a greedy and selfish mentality whereby they only care about earning more wealth irrespective of the negative effects it has on them and others. These people consume financial interest, just like a greedy person consumes food when they are extremely hungry. They become so obsessed with earning more wealth by

whatever means that they appear insane by normal standards. The muslims who adopts this mentality will undoubtedly destroy their faith as they will do things which contradict it. In fact, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2376, that the excessive love and desire for wealth and leadership is more destructive to a muslim's faith than the destruction caused by two hungry wolves which are set free on a herd of sheep. It is important to understand that this insane attitude will prevent one from achieving peace of mind, even if they obtain much wealth. This is because their attitude will cause them to misuse the blessings they have been granted, as a result they will not obtain a balanced mental and physical state and they will undoubtedly misplace everything and everyone within their life. The constant thought of gaining more wealth and the constant fear of losing whatever wealth they have obtained will only increase their stress, anxiety and trouble in both worlds. Extreme long hours of work and a lack of sleep and rest will only make things worse. Irrespective of how much wealth and other worldly things they obtain, they therefore will never find peace of mind. This is quite obvious when one observes the people who adopted the intense greed for obtaining wealth. Therefore, a muslim must avoid all forms of unlawful wealth, such as financial interest, for the sake of their mental and physical health.

In addition, it is important to note that just like a person's intention is the inward foundation of Islam, earning and utilizing lawful things is the outward foundation of Islam. If one's foundation is corrupt, then anything they do will be corrupt and rejected by Allah, the Exalted, such as donating charity. Corrupting the foundation of one's faith is far worse than committing sins which affect other parts of their faith and must therefore be avoided at all costs.

Allah, the Exalted, then warns muslims to avoid making any excuses as they will not be accepted by Him. The issue of differentiating between trade and financial interest has been discussed earlier but even if a muslim does not understand the wisdom behind certain prohibitions or commands of Islam, it is still their duty to accept and act on them as a muslim does not have the right to pick and choose which commands and prohibitions to accept or reject. They must always remember that if something is lawful, then it is acceptable and good for them to use in a balanced way. And when something is unlawful, then it is undoubtedly harmful to them, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 7 Al A'raf, verse 157:

"Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and prohibits them from what is wrong and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil and relieves them of their burden and the shackles which were upon them…"

And chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 275:

"…That is because they say, "Trade is [just] like interest." But Allāh has permitted trade and has forbidden interest…"

In addition, this verse warns against a deceiving attitude whereby one only aims to fulfil their desires through arguing instead of discovering the truth

and acting on it. The issue is financial interest, not trading, yet people place trading first when comparing the two in order to make it appear that prohibiting financial interest is as absurd as prohibiting trade. People who only aim to fulfil their desires adopt a mentality whereby they attempt to make the truth seem foolish through extreme examples. For example, if a person who does not desire to donate charity is encouraged to do so by another, they will claim that they are being advised to give all their assets away and become homeless. They intentionally take the advice out of context so that it sounds absurd. Or when people are encouraged to study and act on Islamic teachings so that they improve their character towards Allah, the Exalted, and people, they will claim that they cannot be perfect, as the adviser demands. Even though the adviser did not demand perfection yet the person takes the advice out of context and to an extreme level so that it sounds absurd, as they do not wish to act on the advice. This attitude must be avoided as right guidance in both worldly and religious matters can only be obtained when one accepts and acts on the truth. Without right guidance one will not be able to differentiate between the right and wrong paths in life. They will constantly make the wrong choices which will only cause them further stress, anxiety and trouble in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 275:

"…So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allāh…"

Generally speaking, sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people. In

addition, this verse also indicates that as the message of Allah, the Exalted, has been delivered, it is the duty on every muslim to learn and act on the commands and prohibitions of Islam, as claiming ignorance or any other excuse will not be accepted by Allah, the Exalted. Just like a licensed driver is obliged to learn the rules of the road, so is the muslim obliged to learn and obey the rules of Islam whether they understand them or not.

Allah, the Exalted, then warns of the great danger of persisting on major sins, such as dealing with financial interest. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 275:

"…So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allāh. But whoever returns [to dealing in interest or usury] - those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein."

A muslim will not remain in Hell forever, even if they enter it because of their sins. Therefore, this verse warns muslims to avoid persisting on major sins otherwise they may well leave this world without their faith. This is the greatest loss. This is because faith is like a plant which must be nourished with good actions and protected from sins. Just like a plant which fails to obtain nourishment or is not protected from harmful things will die, so may well the faith of a person die if it is not nourished with good actions or protected from sins. This warning is repeated in the next verse. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 276:

“Allāh destroys interest and gives increase for charities. And Allāh does not like every sinning disbeliever.”

Allah, the Exalted, increasing charity and destroying financial interest has been discussed earlier, but to summarise, as Allah, the Exalted, alone controls all things, He will ensure that the one who donates charity thereby using the blessings they have been granted correctly, will receive an increase in blessings and mercy in both worlds. Whereas, the one who deals with unlawful things will find that every worldly thing and person within their life will become a source of stress, anxiety and trouble for them. Even if this person’s wealth increases, their mental wellbeing will be destroyed, even if this is not obvious to them and even if they experience moments of fun. This is quite obvious when one observes those who misuse the blessings they have been granted. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you,

and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Therefore, a person must accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake, even if it contradicts their desires. They must behave as a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. The same way this wise patient will achieve good mental and physical health, so will the person who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings. This is because the only One who has the knowledge required to ensure a person achieves a balanced mental and physical state is Allah, the Exalted. The knowledge of the mental and physical states of humans possessed by society will never be enough to achieve this outcome, despite all the research that has been undertaken, as they cannot solve every issue a person can face within their life nor can their advice cause one to avoid all types of mental and physical stress due to limited knowledge, experience and foresight. Allah, the Exalted, alone has this knowledge and He has granted it to mankind in the form of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This truth is obvious when one observes those who use the blessings they have been granted according to Islamic teachings and those who do not. Even though, in most cases, patients do not understand the science behind the medicines they are prescribed and therefore blindly trust their doctor, Allah, the Exalted, invites people to reflect on the teachings of Islam so that they can appreciate its positive effects on their lives. He does not expect people to blindly trust the teachings of Islam and instead He wants them to recognize its truthfulness from its clear proofs. But this requires a person to adopt an unbiased and open mind when approaching the teachings of Islam. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me….”"

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 275:

“…So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allāh. But whoever returns [to dealing in interest or usury] - those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.”

This verse also differentiates between real hope in Allah, the Exalted, and wishful thinking. Wishful thinking involves persisting on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, while expecting His mercy and forgiveness in both worlds. This attitude has no value in Islam. Whereas, real hope involves striving in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly according to Islamic teachings and reforming one’s behaviour and then hoping for the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This difference has been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. Therefore, one must appreciate the difference and ensure they adopt real hope in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and avoid wishful thinking, as it has no value in Islam.

Allah, the Exalted, then encourages people to accept and act on Islamic teachings for their own sake, so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 277:

“Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds and establish prayer and give zakāh will have their reward with their Lord, and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

Actualising one’s verbal declaration of faith is vital as good deeds are the proof and currency one needs in order to obtain peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 275:

“*Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds…”*

As discussed earlier, faith is like a plant which must be nourished with good actions otherwise it may well die, just like a plant which does not obtain nourishment, such as sunlight, will die. Therefore, one must avoid the misguided attitude of claiming belief in Islam while failing to practically act on it. The very definition of a muslim is the one who has practically submitted to Allah, the Exalted, and this definition must therefore be fulfilled. Generally speaking, this practical submission involves using the blessings one has been granted correctly, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This

general submission is then mentioned with specific examples. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 277:

"…and establish prayer…"

Establishing the obligatory prayers includes fulfilling them with their full conditions and etiquettes, such as offering them on time. Establishing the obligatory prayers is often repeated in the Holy Quran as it is the most important practical proof of one's faith in Allah, the Exalted. In addition, as the daily prayers are all spread out, they act as a constant reminder of the Day of Judgement and practically preparing for it, as each stage of the obligatory prayer is connected to Judgement Day. When one stands up right, this is how they will stand in front of Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. Chapter 83 Al Mutaffifin, verses 4-6:

"Do they not think that they will be resurrected. For a tremendous Day The Day when mankind will stand before the Lord of the worlds?"

When they bow, it reminds them of the many people who will be criticized on Judgement Day for not bowing to Allah, the Exalted, during their lives on Earth. Chapter 77 Al Mursalat, verse 48:

“And when it is said to them, "Bow [in prayer]," they do not bow.”

This criticism also includes not practically submitting to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, in all aspects of one’s life. When one prostrates in the prayer, it reminds them of how people will be invited to prostrate to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. But those who did not prostrate correctly to Him during their lives on Earth, which involves obeying Him in all aspects of their lives, will not be able to do this on Judgement Day. Chapter 68 Al Qalam, verses 42-43:

"On the Day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so. Their eyes humbled, humiliation will cover them. And they used to be invited to prostration while they were sound.”

When one sits on their knees in the prayer, it reminds them of how they will be sitting in this position in front of Allah, the Exalted, on the Day of Judgement, fearing their final judgement. Chapter 45 Al Jathiyah, verse 28:

“And you will see every nation kneeling [from fear]. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], "Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do.””

The one who prays with these elements in mind will establish their prayers correctly. This in turn will ensure they sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, in between the prayers. Chapter 29 Al Ankabut, verse 45:

"…Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing…"

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Him as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 277:

"…and give zakah…"

The obligatory charity is only a tiny portion of one's overall income and is only given when one possesses a fixed amount. One of the aims of donating the obligatory charity is that it reminds a muslim that the wealth they possess does not belong to them, otherwise they would be free to spend it how they wished. The wealth was created and granted to them by none other than Allah, the Exalted, and therefore must be used according to His pleasure. In

fact, every blessing one possesses is only a loan which must be repaid to its rightful Owner, Allah, the Exalted. This is achieved when one uses the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. The one who fails to understand this truth and instead behaves as if the blessings they were granted, such as their wealth, belongs to them and therefore refrains from donating the obligatory charity, will face a penalty, just like the one who fails to repay a worldly loan faces a penalty. For example, a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 1403, warns that the person who does not donate their obligatory charity will encounter a large poisonous snake which will continuously bite them on Judgement Day. Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 180:

“And let not those who [greedily] withhold what Allah has given them of His bounty ever think that it is better for them. Rather, it is worse for them. Their necks will be encircled by what they withheld on the Day of Resurrection…”

In this world, the very wealth they fail to donate the obligatory charity on will become a source of their stress and misery, as they failed to remember that Allah, the Exalted, has a right over the blessings He granted them. Chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you,

and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

Those who support their verbal declaration of faith through physical acts of obedience will gain reward in both worlds, as long as they adopt a good intention. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 277:

"Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds and establish prayer and give zakāh will have their reward with their Lord…"

A good intention is when one acts in order to please Allah, the Exalted. The one who acts for any other reason will not gain any reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A positive sign of a good intention is that a person does not expect nor hope for any compensation or gratitude from people.

As discussed earlier, those who use the blessings they have been granted correctly according to Islamic teachings, will obtain a balanced mental and physical state and they will correctly place everyone and everything within their life while adequately preparing for their accountability on Judgement Day. This leads to peace of mind in both worlds. As Allah, the Exalted, alone possesses the knowledge of all things, including the mental and physical states of humans, He alone can advise the perfect code of conduct which leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Therefore, one must accept and act

on Islamic teachings, even if it contradicts their desires, just like a wise patient accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 277:

“…and there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

It is important to note that this does not mean one will not face stress in this world, as this is part of the test of living in this world. Rather, this means that they will be provided the strength and guidance to deal with every difficulty they face so that they overcome them while obtaining countless reward and peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

Whereas, the one who rejects Islamic teachings will find that they are overcome and overpowered by every stressful situation they encounter. As a result, they will drift away from peace of mind with the passing of time and therefore lead a life full of stress, anxiety and mental disorders, such as depression, substance addiction and even suicidal tendencies, even if they experience moments of fun. Chapter 9 At Tawbah, verse 82:

“So let them laugh a little and [then] weep much as recompense for what they used to earn.”

And chapter 20 Taha, verses 124-126:

"And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed [i.e., difficult] life, and We will gather [i.e., raise] him on the Day of Resurrection blind." He will say, "My Lord, why have you raised me blind while I was [once] seeing?" [Allāh] will say, "Thus did Our signs come to you, and you forgot [i.e., disregarded] them; and thus will you this Day be forgotten.""

In an earlier verse, Allah, the Exalted, connected persisting on major sins, such as dealing in financial interest, to disbelief. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 275:

“…But Allāh has permitted trade and has forbidden interest. So whoever has received an admonition from his Lord and desists may have what is past, and his affair rests with Allāh. But whoever returns [to dealing in interest or usury] - those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.”

Then Allah, the Exalted, connects avoiding persisting on major sins with belief. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 278:

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and give up what remains [due to you] of interest, if you should be believers.”

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Just like a fruit bearing tree is only useful when it produces fruit, similarly, faith is only useful when it produces good actions. In this case, the proof of one’s faith is avoiding persisting on major sins, such as dealing with financial interest. Therefore, persisting on major sins contradicts true belief. As discussed earlier, this person must fear that they may well die without their faith, which would be the greatest loss for them. Just like a plant dies when it is not protected from harmful things, so may well a person’s faith die if they fail to protect it from perpetual sins.

Allah, the Exalted, then warns everyone, especially muslims, of the consequences of persisting on dealing with financial interest. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 279:

“And if you do not, then be informed of a war [against you] from Allāh and His Messenger…”

The one who has Allah, the Exalted, opposing him in this world and in the next cannot succeed nor obtain peace of mind, irrespective of how many worldly things, such as wealth, they obtain. As Allah, the Exalted, controls all things, such as the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, He alone decides who obtains peace of mind and who does not. This fact is obvious when one observes the rich and famous and how they lead miserable lives even though they enjoy worldly luxuries. In addition, war from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, after his passing, could be referring to him testifying against a muslim on Judgement Day instead of interceding on their behalf. It does not take a scholar to conclude what will be the outcome of this testification. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 89:

“And [mention] the Day when We will resurrect among every nation a witness over them from themselves [i.e., their prophet]. And We will bring you, [i.e. Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], as a witness over these [i.e., your nation]…”

As per usual, the door of repentance is always open for people, as long as they make use of it before their time runs out. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 279:

“…But if you repent, you may have your principal - [thus] you do no wrong, nor are you wronged.”

And chapter 4 An Nisa, verses 17-18:

“The repentance accepted by Allāh is only for those who do wrong in ignorance [i.e. carelessness] and then repent soon [after]. It is those to whom Allāh will turn in forgiveness, and Allāh is ever Knowing and Wise. But repentance is not [accepted] of those who [continue to] do evil deeds up until, when death comes to one of them, he says, "Indeed, I have repented now," or of those who die while they are disbelievers. For them We have prepared a painful punishment.”

Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

As the majority of transactions which involve financial interest are linked to loans, Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that the loans which do not involve financial interest are lawful and lead to reward, especially, when leniency is shown. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 280:

“And if someone is in hardship, then [let there be] postponement until [a time of] ease…”

When others are in financial difficulties, a muslim should strive to aid them according to their means, as this leads to the constant support of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been confirmed in a Hadith found in Sunan Abu Dawud, number 4893.

Showing leniency and good conduct during business dealings will improve one's business reputation, which in turn will aid their business. So adopting leniency in matters of business leads to benefit in both worldly and religious matters. Adopting leniency in matters of business will also ensure a Muslim understands that their business is not their number one priority in life. It is nothing but a means to an end, the end being achieving peace of mind in this world while preparing practically for the hereafter. This involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in Islamic teachings. Whereas, the one who fails to show leniency in matters of business, will become greedier. And greed always focuses a person's attention to earning and hoarding the material world. This becomes their ultimate goal and number one priority in life. This then prevents them from correctly using the blessings they have been granted, which prevents them from achieving peace of mind in this world or in the next. The one who understands this and therefore prioritizes obtaining peace of mind in both worlds over accumulating the material world will be encouraged to go a step further by waving the debt they are owed for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. The one who does this will be relieved by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 225. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 280:

“And if someone is in hardship, then [let there be] postponement until [a time of] ease. But if you give [from your right as] charity, then it is better for you, if you only knew.”

Generally speaking, this verse also indicates the importance of avoiding always demanding one’s full rights from people. Even though a person has a right to demand someone else to fulfil their rights fully, none the less, leniency is always preferred, as the one who gives up their right for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, will be blessed by Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. And this reward will be better than if the person demanded their full rights from others. For example, a parent should not demand their full rights from their children and instead show leniency whenever possible. For example, a parent has the right to demand their adult child to make dinner for them but if they are able to do it themself, then they should and relieve their child of this duty for the sake of Allah, the Exalted. This leads to independence from people and a great reward for showing leniency to others in respect to the rights they are owed.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 280:

“…then it is better for you, if you only knew.”

This encourages muslims to learn and act on Islamic teachings so that they achieve the best results from every situation they encounter. Just like a person desires the largest profit from an investment, a muslim should desire the best results and reward from every situation they encounter. This is only possible when one has Islamic knowledge which teaches them how to behave so that they obtain the best results. Whereas, ignorance of Islamic teachings will only cause one to make decisions which do not lead to the best results in both worlds.

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that the only one who will pay heed to the main verses under discussion is the person who fears their accountability on Judgement Day. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 281:

"And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allāh. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged."

Therefore, one can assess how much they truly believe in their accountability on the Day of Judgement by observing how much they adhere to the teachings of Islam, such as avoiding financial interest. A person must remember that everyone faces the consequences of their actions in both worlds. In this world, these consequences are often subtle and as a result many people do not connect their disobedience to Allah, the Exalted, to the stress and difficulties they face. For example, the worldly things they obtain through disobeying Allah, the Exalted, such as wealth, will become a source of stress, misery and trouble for them, even though they hoped these worldly things would become a source of comfort for them. Due to their ignorance, they will blame the few good things within their life, such as their spouse, for

the mental disorders they are facing, such as depression. When they cut out these few things from their lives, their mental disorders will only get worse and may even push them to suicide. Whereas, the consequences of one's actions in the hereafter will be very clear but by then it will be too late to sincerely repent and change their behaviour. Therefore, one must study and act on the clear proofs found within Islamic teachings, which discuss Judgement Day, so that they strengthen their faith in it. The stronger one's faith in it, the more they will practically prepare for it. This preparation involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 281:

"And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allāh. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged."

The way a person will be returned to Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day will be according to the state in which they died in. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 7232. This means that the one who dies while persisting on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, will be resurrected and returned to Allah, the Exalted, in a state of obedience. Whereas, the one who disobeyed Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, will be resurrected and returned to Allah, the Exalted, in a state of disobedience. It does not take a scholar to conclude the outcome of a person based on this discussion. Therefore, a person must strive to persist on the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings, so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. One must not fool themself into believing they can persist on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, by misusing the blessings they have been granted, yet die in a state

of obedience and therefore be resurrected in a state of obedience. This is nothing but wishful thinking which has no value in Islam.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 281:

“And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allāh. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged.”

In addition, as the main verses under discussion were about earning wealth, verse 281, reminds people that they should be more concerned about earning good deeds and avoiding sins, as this defines whether one achieves peace of mind in both worlds or not. Everyone irrespective of their belief or background desires to obtain peace of mind, even if they search for it in different places. Allah, the Exalted, makes it clear that peace of mind in both worlds is not connected to obtaining many worldly things, such as wealth, it is simply connected to whether or not one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings. Therefore, one must be more concerned about earning peace of mind in both worlds, through good deeds, than earning wealth or other worldly things. As discussed earlier in detail, as Allah, the Exalted, alone knows all things, He alone can provide the perfect code of conduct which leads to peace of mind in both worlds. People, irrespective of how much knowledge they obtain, will never be able to achieve this, due to a lack of complete knowledge, experience, foresight and biases.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 281:

"And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allāh. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged."

As justice will be established on Judgement Day, a person must strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people. Sadly, many muslims wrong other people while believing they will obtain salvation in both worlds as they strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, such as performing the obligatory prayers. It is vital to understand that the wrongdoer will be forced to hand over their good deeds to their victims on Judgement Day, and if necessary, the wrongdoer will take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may well cause the wrongdoer to be hurled into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579. Therefore, one must strive to fulfil the rights of Allah, the Exalted, and people, as this leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 281:

"And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allāh. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged."

According to many scholars, this is the last verse to be revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This has been mentioned in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 2, Page 83.

Muslims should try to understand the importance of this verse, as it is the final words revealed to mankind from Allah, the Exalted. He chose to remind mankind of the Day of Judgment and preparing for it over all other things He could have spoken about. This is because practically preparing for the Day of Judgement is the very purpose of life in this world. Just like a person with a work visa only travels to another country in order to obtain as much wealth as possible to take back to their home country, every person is on a work visa in this world. Their aim is to accumulate as many good deeds as possible to take with them to their accountability on Judgement Day. These good deeds are obtained when one uses the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. An added mercy from Allah, the Exalted, is that the one who behaves in this manner will adequately prepare for Judgement Day and will be granted peace of mind in this world also. Therefore, one should not fear they will be deprived of peace of mind in this world if they practically prepare for the Day of Judgement. On the contrary, they will be blessed in both worlds with peace of mind. A promise from the Lord of the worlds, who controls all things. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

But the same way the employee on a work visa will be harshly criticised for failing to fulfil the purpose of working in a different country, which is to gain as much wealth as possible to take back to their home country, so will the person who fails to accumulate good deeds in this world. But depending on the severity of one's failure to fulfil their purpose in this world, their criticism may involve punishment in Hell.

In addition, the same way an invention which fails to fulfil its primary function of creation is classified a failure, so will the person who fails their purpose of creation, which is to practically prepare for their meeting with Allah, the Exalted, on Judgement Day. The same way the failed invention is discarded, so will the person who failed to fulfil their purpose in this world be discarded. As there is only one place a person will be discarded into on Judgement Day, people must strive to avoid this outcome by fulfilling their purpose in this world by using the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings, so that they achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 281:

"And fear a Day when you will be returned to Allāh. Then every soul will be compensated for what it earned, and they will not be wronged."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 282-283

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ إِذَا تَدَايَنتُم بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَٱكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُب بَّيْنَكُمْ
كَاتِبٌۢ بِٱلْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَن يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ ٱللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيُمْلِلِ ٱلَّذِى
عَلَيْهِ ٱلْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ رَبَّهُۥ وَلَا يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْـًٔا فَإِن كَانَ ٱلَّذِى عَلَيْهِ ٱلْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ
ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَن يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُۥ بِٱلْعَدْلِ وَٱسْتَشْهِدُوا۟ شَهِيدَيْنِ مِن
رِّجَالِكُمْ فَإِن لَّمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَٱمْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ ٱلشُّهَدَآءِ أَن تَضِلَّ
إِحْدَىٰهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَىٰهُمَا ٱلْأُخْرَىٰ وَلَا يَأْبَ ٱلشُّهَدَآءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا۟ وَلَا تَسْـَٔمُوٓا۟ أَن تَكْتُبُوهُ
صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلِهِۦ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَٰدَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰٓ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ
أَن تَكُونَ تِجَٰرَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا
وَأَشْهِدُوٓا۟ إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَآرَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِن تَفْعَلُوا۟ فَإِنَّهُۥ فُسُوقٌۢ بِكُمْ
وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ۖ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَٱللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٢﴾

۞ وَإِن كُنتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا۟ كَاتِبًا فَرِهَٰنٌ مَّقْبُوضَةٌ ۖ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ
ٱلَّذِى ٱؤْتُمِنَ أَمَٰنَتَهُۥ وَلْيَتَّقِ ٱللَّهَ رَبَّهُۥ ۗ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا۟ ٱلشَّهَٰدَةَ وَمَن يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُۥٓ ءَاثِمٌ
قَلْبُهُۥ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٣﴾

"O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him. So let him write and let the one who

has the obligation [i.e., the debtor] dictate. And let him fear Allah, his Lord, and not leave anything out of it. But if the one who has the obligation is of limited understanding or weak or unable to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate in justice. And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses - so that if one of them [i.e., the women] errs, then the other can remind her. And let not the witnesses refuse when they are called upon. And do not be [too] weary to write it, whether it is small or large, for its [specified] term. That is more just in the sight of Allah and stronger as evidence and more likely to prevent doubt between you, except when it is an immediate transaction which you conduct among yourselves. For [then] there is no blame upon you if you do not write it. And take witnesses when you conclude a contract. Let no scribe be harmed or any witness. For if you do so, indeed, it is [grave] disobedience in you. And fear Allah. And Allah teaches you. And Allah is Knowing of all things.

And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then a security deposit [should be] taken. And if one of you entrusts another, then let him who is entrusted discharge his trust [faithfully] and let him fear Allah, his Lord. And do not conceal testimony, for whoever conceals it - his heart is indeed sinful, and Allah is Knowing of what you do."

When Allah, the Exalted, calls upon the believers within the Holy Quran, His call is often connected to actualizing their verbal claim of faith. This is because a verbal claim of faith without actions has very little value in Islam. Actions are the proof and evidence one is required to obtain so that they obtain reward and mercy in both worlds. Just like a fruit bearing tree is only useful when it produces fruit, similarly, faith is only useful when it produces good actions. In this case, Allah, the Exalted, advises muslims to take part in lawful business transactions in an upright and honest manner. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 282:

"O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice…"

The first thing to note is that it is vital to understand that Islam is a complete code of conduct which affects every aspect of a person's life. Islam is not merely a few religious practices which have no effect on a person's day to day activities. Sadly, because of ignorance of this fact, many muslims who perform the religious practices, such as the five daily obligatory prayers, avoid implementing the teachings of Islam in their everyday activities, such as their business dealings. Islam is not a coat which can be put on and taken off according to one's desires and situation. Islam is a way of life which must be implemented in every situation one faces and throughout their daily activities. The one who fails to behave in this manner is only obeying and worshipping their desires even if they claim to be obeying Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

"Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?..."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 282:

"O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down. And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allāh has taught him…"

This also indicates the importance of understanding that all knowledge, whether religious or worldly, was taught by Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 96 Al Alaq, verses 3-5:

"Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught man that which he knew not."

Therefore, a muslim should not adopt an extreme mentality whereby they either dedicate all their efforts to gaining worldly knowledge while abandoning religious knowledge, nor should they dedicate all their efforts to gaining and acting on religious knowledge while abandoning worldly knowledge. A muslim should instead adopt a balanced approach whereby they learn and act on religious knowledge throughout their life and learn useful worldly knowledge so that they can obtain a good lawful job which will aid them in fulfilling their necessities and responsibilities. One should

therefore take advantage of the opportunities of gaining worldly knowledge provided to them, such as a free education, and not reject this by believing it has nothing to do with pleasing Allah, the Exalted. The one who gains a good worldly education which leads to a good lawful job whereby they can fulfill their necessities and responsibilities and aid others, will receive reward from Allah, the Exalted. But it is vital to ensure that during one's journey in gaining worldly knowledge, they must continue to study the teachings of Islam also, as Islamic knowledge will aid them in correctly using their worldly knowledge and the blessings they have been granted so that they achieve a balanced mental and physical state and correctly place everything and everyone within their life. This leads to peace of mind in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 282:

"…And let a scribe write [it] between you in justice. Let no scribe refuse to write as Allāh has taught him. So let him write and let the one who has the obligation [i.e., the debtor] dictate. And let him fear Allāh, his Lord, and not leave anything out of it…"

As discussed earlier, Allah, the Exalted, often connects fearing Him to worldly dealings, such as financial transactions. This is because Islam encompasses every aspect of a person's life and therefore they will be held accountable on Judgement Day for every intention, every spoken word and every action whether they are connected to religious or worldly matters. One should therefore bear this in mind and adhere to the teachings of Islam in every situation they encounter.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 282:

“…But if the one who has the obligation is of limited understanding or weak or unable to dictate himself, then let his guardian dictate in justice. And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if there are not two men [available], then a man and two women from those whom you accept as witnesses - so that if one of them [i.e., the women] errs, then the other can remind her…”

As most women did not take part in business transactions and were therefore unfamiliar with business contracts, taking two women as witnesses in the place of a single male witness was advised. In addition, as women were mainly caretakers of their homes, they would have little time to take part in legal cases. Therefore, by taking two women as witnesses, any one of them could testify in a legal case if they were both called upon. Therefore, a person should not misinterpret the teachings of Islam in order to falsely prove that women are regarded inferior to men. The reality of superiority has been summarised in a single statement within the Holy Quran. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 13:

“…Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you…”

Superiority only lies in how much one sincerely obeys Allah, the Exalted. This involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly according to Islamic teachings. The more one obeys Allah, the Exalted, the superior they are. No other worldly standard which separates people, such as gender, ethnicity or social status, has any value in the sight of Islam. But as the intention and some of the actions of people are hidden no one should claim superiority for themself or others. Chapter 53 An Najm, verse 32:

"…So do not claim yourselves to be pure; He is most knowing of who fears Him."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 282:

"…And let not the witnesses refuse when they are called upon…"

Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of aiding others, as a society only progresses when its members aid each other. Therefore, one must actively aid others according to their means, as this will ensure they obtain the constant support of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6853. The one who has the support of Allah, the Exalted, will be rightly guided through every situation so that they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 282:

“…And do not be [too] weary to write it, whether it is small or large, for its [specified] term. That is more just in the sight of Allāh and stronger as evidence and more likely to prevent doubt between you, except when it is an immediate transaction which you conduct among yourselves. For [then] there is no blame upon you if you do not write it. And take witnesses when you conclude a contract…”

Generally speaking, people should always interact with one another in a clear and unambiguous way. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab,verse 70:

“O you who have believed, fear Allāh and speak words of appropriate justice.”

As actions are often followed by words, the one who is upright and clear in their speech, will be upright and clear in their actions also. This avoids confusion and negative assumptions about the character and words of other people. Negative assumptions often lead to sins, such as backbiting and slander. Chapter 49 Al Hujurat, verse 12:

“O you who have believed, avoid much [negative] assumption. Indeed, some assumption is sin…”

Negative assumptions also lead to broken relationships which prevents a muslim from fulfilling the rights of other people. This has a detrimental impact on a family and an entire society. Therefore, a person must be clear and open in all their interactions and dealings with people, whether in personal situations or financial.

Allah, the Exalted, then warns muslims not pressurize or intimate the scribe who compiles a business contract, such as a lawyer, or the witness who takes part in the contract and who may be called upon to testify in a legal court case. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 282:

“…Let no scribe be harmed or any witness. For if you do so, indeed, it is [grave] disobedience in you. And fear Allāh…”

This often occurs within the business world, whereby powerful corporations intimate different people involved in a business deal for the sake of worldly gain, such as wealth. Even though this is a worldly matter, none the less, as per usual, Allah, the Exalted, connects all matters, whether religious or worldly, to His obedience or disobedience. Therefore, a muslim must adhere to the teachings of Islam and maintain an upright character when dealing

with people. Every person faces the consequences of their actions in this world and in the next. In this world, the worldly blessings they obtain through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will become a source of stress, anxiety and misery for them, even if they experience moments of fun. This is quite evident when one observes those who wrong others. For example, those who wrong others in order to achieve political leadership will always be fearful and paranoid that someone will remove them from their position of power. This prevents them from obtaining peace of mind, even if they experience moments of entertainment. And in the hereafter, justice will be established. This involves the wrongdoer handing over their good deeds to their victims, and if necessary, the wrongdoer will take the sins of their victims until justice is established. This may well cause the wrongdoer to be hurled into Hell on Judgement Day. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 6579.

Harming people involved within a business contract can also include offering them bribes. As the person who offers or takes bribes has been cursed, therefore offering bribes to others is a hidden way of harming them. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1337. The one who is cursed will lose the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. Achieving peace of mind and success in both worlds without the mercy of Allah, the Exalted, is simply impossible.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 282:

"…And fear Allāh. And Allāh teaches you. And Allāh is Knowing of all things."

This verse concludes by reminding people that they must sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings, in order to obtain success in both worlds. This is because Allah, the Exalted, possesses the knowledge, such as the mental and physical states of humans, in order to grant mankind the perfect code of conduct so that they achieve a balanced mental and physical state and correctly place everything and everyone within their life while adequately preparing for the Day of Judgement. In addition, this code of conduct will ensure justice and peace spreads within society as it is based on justice, fairness and equality and is far removed from any biases, which favour certain groups of people over others, such as the rich. This code of conduct therefore leads to peace of mind for an individual and an entire society as long as people adhere to it. Any man-made code of conduct will never achieve these outcomes due to a lack of knowledge, experience and biases. Therefore, one must study the clear proofs and evidence of the code of conduct granted by Allah, the Exalted, in order to recognize its widespread and unparalleled benefits. Even if one fails to understand some of the wisdoms behind the Islamic code of conduct or their desires are contradicted by it, they should behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Just like this wise patient will achieve good physical health, the one who accepts and acts on the Islamic code of conduct will achieve peace of mind and body in both worlds.

It is important to note that verse 282 is the longest verse in the Holy Quran. Interestingly enough it does not discuss the duties directly connected to Allah, the Exalted, such as the prayers or the Holy Pilgrimage. Instead, it discusses the importance of treating others in the right way especially, during

business transactions. Therefore, Muslims must always strive to fulfil both parts of faith meaning, the duties towards Allah, the Exalted, and the duties towards people. The latter can be fulfilled by treating others how one desires to be treated by people.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions the case of doing business while travelling and how one must behave in an upright way. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 283:

"And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then a security deposit [should be] taken. And if one of you entrusts another, then let him who is entrusted discharge his trust [faithfully] and let him fear Allāh, his Lord…"

Generally speaking, it is an aspect of hypocrisy to betray one's trusts. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Bukhari, number 2749. This includes all the trusts one possesses from Allah, the Exalted, and people. Every blessing one possesses has been entrusted to them by Allah, the Exalted. The only way to fulfill these trusts is by using the blessings correctly, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. This leads to further blessings and mercy in both worlds, as this is true gratitude. Chapter 14 Ibrahim, verse 7:

“And [remember] when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]…”

The trusts between people are important to fulfill also. The one who has been entrusted with someone else's belongings should not misuse them and only use them according to the wishes of the owner. One of the greatest trusts between people is keeping conversations secret, unless there is some obvious benefit in informing others. Sadly, this is often overlooked amongst muslims. One must fulfil their trusts just like they desire other people to fulfil the trusts between them.

In addition, these trusts include the people under one's care, such as dependents. A Muslim must strive to fulfill these trusts by fulfilling the rights of these people according to the teachings of Islam. For example, it is a duty on a parent to encourage their children to learn, understand and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. All trusts must be fulfilled as one will be held accountable for them in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 34:

“…And fulfill [every] trusts. Indeed, the trust is ever [that about which one will be] questioned.”

As one cannot escape the consequences of betraying their trusts in this world or in the next, it is vital for them to fulfill them to the best of their ability.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 283:

“And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then a security deposit [should be] taken. And if one of you entrusts another, then let him who is entrusted discharge his trust [faithfully] and let him fear Allāh, his Lord…”

Throughout the Holy Quran, Allah, the Exalted, combines Islamic rules to fearing Him and fearing the consequences of breaking these rules. This is because both a good law system and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, is required for justice and peace to spread within society. A good law system without the fear of Allah, the Exalted, is not enough, as the people who are confident they can escape being held accountable for breaking the law by the government, will commit crimes. In addition, a good law system can be manipulated when one does not fear Allah, the Exalted. On the other hand, fearing Allah, the Exalted, will prevent one from wrongdoing others directly but in the absence of a good and fair law system, people will be wronged by the government. For example, the tax system always favours the rich over the rest of society. Therefore, both a good law system, which can only come from Allah, the Exalted, as He knows all things, and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, is required to ensure justice and peace spreads within society.

Allah, the Exalted, then warns against concealing testimony in legal court cases. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 283:

"…And do not conceal testimony, for whoever conceals it - his heart is indeed sinful…"

This includes perjury, whereby one intentionally gives false testimony. It is enough as a warning that the one who behaves in this manner in order to unlawfully take someone else's property will go to Hell, even if they took a twig of a tree from them. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Sahih Muslim, number 353.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 283:

"…And do not conceal testimony, for whoever conceals it - his heart is indeed sinful…"

This verse also connects inward negative characteristics, such as greed, to outward sins. This indicates the importance of purifying one's spiritual heart so that it leads to good and pure actions. This purification involves learning and adopting positive characteristics discussed within Islamic teachings, such as patience, gratitude and the fear of Allah, the Exalted, and avoiding

the negative characteristics discussed within Islamic teachings, such as greed, envy and pride. This is vital to do as the one who has a purified spiritual heart will do good actions which involves using the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings. This leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Whereas, the one whose spiritual heart is impure will misuse the blessings they have been granted. This will prevent them from achieving peace of mind and success in both worlds. Chapter 26 Ash Shu'ara, verses 88-89:

"The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a purified heart."

As Allah, the Exalted, knows the state of one's spiritual heart, their intentions, speech and actions, He will hold them accountable in both worlds. One must therefore prepare for facing the consequences of the state of their spiritual heart by learning and acting on Islamic teachings so that they purify their spiritual heart, which in turn leads to good intentions, speech and actions. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 283:

"…and Allāh is Knowing of what you do."

Chapter 2 – Al Baqarah, Verses 284-286 of 286

لِّلَّهِ مَا فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِۗ وَإِن تُبۡدُواْ مَا فِيٓ أَنفُسِكُمۡ أَوۡ تُخۡفُوهُ يُحَاسِبۡكُم بِهِ
ٱللَّهُۖ فَيَغۡفِرُ لِمَن يَشَآءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَآءُۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيۡءٖ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٨٤﴾

ءَامَنَ ٱلرَّسُولُ بِمَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيۡهِ مِن رَّبِّهِۦ وَٱلۡمُؤۡمِنُونَۚ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَمَلَٰٓئِكَتِهِۦ وَكُتُبِهِۦ وَرُسُلِهِۦ
لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيۡنَ أَحَدٖ مِّن رُّسُلِهِۦۚ وَقَالُواْ سَمِعۡنَا وَأَطَعۡنَاۖ غُفۡرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيۡكَ ٱلۡمَصِيرُ
﴿٢٨٥﴾

لَا يُكَلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نَفۡسًا إِلَّا وُسۡعَهَاۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتۡ وَعَلَيۡهَا مَا ٱكۡتَسَبَتۡۗ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذۡنَآ إِن
نَّسِينَآ أَوۡ أَخۡطَأۡنَاۚ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحۡمِلۡ عَلَيۡنَآ إِصۡرٗا كَمَا حَمَلۡتَهُۥ عَلَى ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبۡلِنَاۚ رَبَّنَا
وَلَا تُحَمِّلۡنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِۦۖ وَٱعۡفُ عَنَّا وَٱغۡفِرۡ لَنَا وَٱرۡحَمۡنَآۚ أَنتَ مَوۡلَىٰنَا فَٱنصُرۡنَا عَلَى
ٱلۡقَوۡمِ ٱلۡكَٰفِرِينَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾

“To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it. Then He will forgive whom He wills and punish whom He wills, and Allah is over all things competent.

The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinction between any of His messengers." And they say, "We hear and

we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination."

Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity. It will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned. "Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred. Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear. And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people.""

Ultimately, as the entire creation belongs to and is under the complete control and jurisdiction of Allah, the Exalted, a person has no choice but to comply with His rules. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 284:

"*To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth…"*

Just like a person will face trouble if they fail to comply with the rules set by the government in charge of a particular country, so will they face trouble in both worlds if they fail to comply with the rules of the Owner of the universe. A person may be able to leave a country if they are not pleased with its rules but they will not be able to escape to a place where the rules and jurisdiction of Allah, the Exalted, do not apply. A person may be able to change the rules of their society but they will never be able to change the rules of Allah, the Exalted. In addition, just like a person who owns a house decides the rules of the house, even if other people object to these rules, similarly, the universe belongs to Allah, the Exalted, and therefore, He alone decides the rules of this universe, whether people like these rules or not. Therefore, one must comply with these rules, for their own sake. The one who understands this fact will comply with the rules of Allah, the Exalted, and strive to obey Him by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A person can either strive to learn the wisdoms behind the commands and prohibitions of Allah, the Exalted, so that they understand how they benefit them and the wider society and how they lead to peace of mind and body in both worlds or they can worship their desires and reject the teachings of Islam. But the one who fails to comply with Islamic rules should prepare themselves to face the consequences of their choice in both worlds and no objections, protests or complaints will save them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 284:

“…*Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it…”*

Some believe this verse was abrogated by chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…”

They believe this as some of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, interpreted verse 284 to mean that Allah, the Exalted, will hold them accountable for their inner thoughts, which are often involuntary and uncontrollable in nature and as a result verse 286 was revealed. This has been discussed in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Volume 2, Pages 96-97. But the verses can be reconciled without the need for abrogation. Verse 286 only clarified their misunderstanding, it did not abrogate verse 284. Verse 284 could be referring to when one makes a firm intention to do something and they either do it or they are prevented from doing it by external factors not under their control. For example, a person may have the firm intention to commit a crime but change their mind because of the presence of police officers which they did not expect. In both cases, this person will be held accountable, even if they did not physically do anything, as they possessed a firm intention and where prevented from acting because of external factors. Therefore, it is vital for a person to adopt the correct intention of pleasing Allah, the Exalted, and combine this with good actions based on Islamic teachings in all cases so that they obtain reward in both worlds. The one who acts for any other reason

will not gain reward from Allah, the Exalted. This has been warned in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 3154. A sign of a good intention is that a person does not expect gratitude or compensation from people.

Being held accountable in the hereafter over one's intentions, speech and actions will be clear. But it is important to remember that one is held accountable in this world also, even if this is not obvious to them. The worldly blessings they obtain through the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, will become a source of stress, anxiety and difficulties for them, even though they hoped these things would become a source of peace and comfort for them. As Allah, the Exalted, controls all things, including the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind, they cannot escape facing this outcome. In addition, when one misuses the blessings they have been granted it will cause them to obtain an imbalanced mental and physical state and cause them to misplace everything and everyone within their life. These things will further prevent them from achieving peace of mind. Therefore, one must strive to always sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings, so that they achieve peace of mind in both worlds. Whichever option one chooses they will be held accountable in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 284:

"…*Whether you show what is within yourselves or conceal it, Allah will bring you to account for it. Then He will forgive whom He wills and punish whom He wills, and Allah is over all things competent."*

As long as one is in this world, the door to sincere repentance is always open and should be used before their time runs out. Sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

In addition, a person must avoid adopting wishful thinking in respect to the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted. Wishful thinking involves persisting on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, while expecting His mercy and forgiveness in both worlds. Whereas, having hope in Allah, the Exalted, involves striving to sincerely obey Him, by using the blessings they have been granted correctly as outlined in Islamic teachings, sincerely repenting whenever they happen to commit a sin and then expecting the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. The difference between hope and wishful thinking has been discussed in this manner in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459.

Allah, the Exalted, then mentions the importance of adopting certainty of faith in respect to the Holy Quran, as this will ensure one acts according to its teachings. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

"The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers…"

This is possibly why the term believers is used instead of muslims, as believers have stronger faith based on the knowledge found within Islamic teachings. Therefore, muslims must dedicate regular time and energy to studying the clear proofs and evidences found within the Holy Quran so that they achieve certainty of faith. Certainty of faith will ensure they act on Islamic teachings in every situation. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted correctly. This leads to a balanced mental and physical state and encourages one to correctly place everything and everyone within their life. This leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Whereas, the one who remains ignorant of Islamic teachings will not obtain certainty of faith. As a result, they will easily misuse the blessings they have been granted. This will prevent them from obtaining peace of mind. This is a major reason why muslims who perform the minimal obligatory duties still do not achieve peace of mind, as they fail to use all the blessings they have been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

“The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers…”

When one studies the Holy Quran with an open and unbiased mind they will undoubtedly appreciate its miraculous nature. The expressions in the Holy Quran are unparalleled and its meanings are explained in a straight forward way. Its words and verses are extremely eloquent and no other book can

surpass it. The Holy Quran mentions the history of the previous nations in detail even though the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, was not educated in history. It commands every good and forbids every evil. Those which affect an individual and those which affect the entire society, so that justice, security and peace spreads throughout every home and community. The Holy Quran avoids exaggerations, lies or any falsehood, unlike poetry, stories and fables. All the verses are beneficial and can be applied practically to one's life. Even when the same story is repeated in the Holy Quran, different important lessons are highlighted. Unlike all other books, the Holy Quran does not bore a person when it is repeatedly studied. The Holy Quran provides promises and warnings and supports them with undeniable and clear proofs. When the Holy Quran discusses something which can seem abstract, such as adopting patience, it always provides a simple and practical way of implementing it into one's life. It encourages people to fulfil the purpose of their creation, which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Him, thereby ensuring they obtain peace of mind and success in both worlds. It makes the straight path obvious and appealing to the one who desires peace of mind and real success in both worlds. The knowledge of the Holy Quran is timeless as it can be applied to every society and age. It is a cure for every emotional, economical and physical difficulty when it is understood and applied correctly. It provides the solution for every problem an individual or an entire society can ever face. One only needs to observe history and how the societies which implemented the teachings of the Holy Quran correctly benefited from its all-encompassing and timeless teachings. Centuries have passed yet not a single letter has been changed in the Holy Quran, as Allah, the Exalted, promised to preserve it. No other book in history possesses this quality. Chapter 15 Al Hijr, verse 9:

"Indeed, it is We who sent down the message [i.e., the Quran], and indeed, We will be its guardian."

Allah, the Exalted, discussed the root problems found within a community and detailed the practical remedy for all of them. By correcting root problems, the countless branch problems which stem from them would automatically be corrected. This is how the Holy Quran addressed all the things a person and society need to succeed in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 89:

"…And We have sent down to you the Book as clarification for all things…"

This is the greatest timeless miracle Allah, the Exalted, bestowed upon His final Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. But only those who seek and act on the truth will benefit from it whereas those who seek their desires and cherry pick from it will only encounter loss in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

"And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

“The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord, and [so have] the believers…”

This also indicates the importance of leading by example. In order to be effective in advising and guiding others, such as one’s children, a muslim must always lead by example, just like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, did. This is only possible when they learn and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, so that they become a practical role model for others, instead of only verbally advising them to do good. One must always avoid contradicting their verbal advice through their actions by becoming practical role models for others to follow.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

“…All of them have believed in Allah…”

Real belief in Allah, the Exalted, involves supporting one’s verbal declaration of belief with actions. The one who believes Allah, the Exalted, is their Lord will inevitably accept their servanthood to Him. A true servant does not search for their own pleasure, nor do they expect others to please them. They will prioritize the pleasure and obedience to their Master over all other things, such as obeying and following people, their own desires, social media, fashion and culture. The only thing a servant desires is to please their

Master. In addition, a servant accepts that everything they possess, including their own life, belongs to their Creator and Master, Allah, the Exalted. Therefore, they will hasten to use everything they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. A true servant will understand that as Allah, the Exalted, is their Creator and Lord and the Creator and Lord of all things, they cannot obtain peace of mind while disobeying Him, as He controls all things, including the spiritual hearts of people, the abode of peace of mind. They will therefore strive hard in His obedience by using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings, as this alone leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Chapter 16 An Nahl, verse 97:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer - We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do."

The more a person acts in this manner, the stronger their belief in Allah, the Exalted, is. In addition, the one who believes in Allah, the Exalted, will be certain that they will be held accountable for their deeds on the Day of Judgement. This will further encourage them to actualize their faith by practically preparing for it, which involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, according to Islamic teachings.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

"…*All of them have believed in Allāh and His angels…"*

Faith in the unseen, the things which are beyond the perception of the five senses, is a vital part of faith as faith in things which are fully perceived and understood does not have the same value as believing in something which cannot be perceived by the five senses, even though they are signs indicating its existence. This is why Allah, the Exalted, will not accept the faith of the one who testifies to His Oneness on Judgement Day as they have witnessed the unseen, such as Hell, Paradise and the Angels. One must therefore strengthen their faith in the unseen things within the creation by studying and acting on the teachings of Islam. This will ensure one's faith in the unseen things go beyond a verbal declaration of faith and are instead reflected in their actions as it encourages them to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. For example, the one who is certain that two Angels are constantly with them who are recording their every word and action in preparation for Judgement Day, will control their speech and actions, even when they are alone.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

"…All of them have believed in Allāh and His angels and His books…"

One must believe in all the divine books revealed to mankind. Specifically, belief in the Holy Quran involves fulfilling its different aspects. These include reciting it correctly and regularly, understanding it and acting on its teachings. A muslim must avoid remaining on the first level whereby they only recite the Holy Quran in a language they do not understand. The Holy Quran is not a book of recitation, it is a book of guidance. Guidance from it can only be achieved when one understands and acts on it. Just like a map will only lead one to their desired destination if they understand and act on it, the Holy Quran can only lead one to peace of mind in both worlds when they understand and act on it. Sadly, failing to encompass the different aspects of the Holy Quran is a major reason why muslims who recite it regularly fail to obtain peace of mind, as they fail to understand and act on its teachings. Acting on it will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind and success in both worlds. But those who fail to understand and implement its teachings will inevitably misuse the blessings they have been granted, which only leads to stress, trouble, and difficulties in both worlds. Chapter 17 Al Isra, verse 82:

"And We send down of the Quran that which is healing and mercy for the believers, but it does not increase the wrongdoers except in loss."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

“…All of them have believed in Allāh and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], "We make no distinction between any of His messengers…”"

Belief in the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, involves practically following their way of life, their conduct and teachings which have been discussed in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Their beautiful conduct is summarized, completed and perfected by the sublime conduct of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. Therefore, one must support their verbal declaration of faith in him by practically learning and acting on his life, teachings and noble character. Chapter 33 Al Ahzab, verse 21:

“There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allāh an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allāh and the Last Day and [who] remembers Allāh often.”

And chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 31:

“Say, [Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him], "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [so] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins…”"

And chapter 59 Al Hashr, verse 7:

"...And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from..."

Therefore, claiming love and respect for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while failing to act on his teachings and character contradicts this verbal claim. Just like everyone hopes for his intercession on Judgement Day, they must fear the chance of him testifying against them on Judgement Day if they fail to learn and act on his traditions and on what he brought, meaning, the Holy Quran. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 30:

“And the Messenger has said, "O my Lord, indeed my people have taken this Qur’ān as [a thing] abandoned."”

If one desires his intercession instead of his testimony against them on Judgement Day, then they must learn and act on the teachings of the Holy Quran and his traditions. This will ensure they use the blessings they have been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, which in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds.

In addition, verbally claiming love and respect for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, while failing to follow his character and conduct has no value in Islam, as the previous nations also claim to love their Holy Prophets, peace be upon them. But as they failed to practically follow their teachings they will not unite with them in the hereafter. Therefore, the one who desires to unite with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in the hereafter must practically follow and act on his teachings and character.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

“…[saying], "We make no distinction between any of His messengers…””

Unlike the previous nations, muslims believe in all the Holy Prophets, peace be upon them, sent by Allah, the Exalted. Generally speaking, this indicates the importance of avoiding picking and choosing what Islamic teachings to act on and which ones to ignore based on one’s desires. Islam is not a coat which can be taken off or put on according to one’s desires. Islam is a complete code of conduct which must be implemented in every situation, even if this contradicts one’s desires. The one who fails to behave in this manner is only worshipping their own desires even if they claim otherwise. Chapter 25 Al Furqan, verse 43:

“Have you seen the one who takes as his god his own desire?...”

A muslim must accept and act on Islamic teachings in every situation even if it contradicts their desires or when they fail to observe the wisdoms behind Islamic teachings. They must behave like a wise patient who accepts and acts on the medical advice of their doctor, knowing it is best for them, even though they are prescribed bitter medicines and a strict diet plan. Just like this patient will achieve good physical health, the muslim who accepts and acts on Islamic teachings will achieve peace of mind in both worlds. This is because Allah, the Exalted, alone can provide the perfect code of conduct which leads to peace of mind, as He alone possesses the knowledge and foresight to do so. All man-made codes of conduct will never achieve this outcome due to short sightedness, a lack of knowledge and biases. This is obvious when one reflects on the codes of conduct created by people with an open mind.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

“…And they say, "We hear and we obey…””

It is important to note that the hearing mentioned in this verse is when one concentrates on what has been said, reflects on it, tries to connect the statement to their own life experiences, determines how to implement what

has been said into their lives and then practically strives to do so. This process and outcome has been indicated in verse 285. Whereas, merely listening to what has been said without this step by step process will never lead to a positive effect on one’s behaviour. Instead, the words will pass through their ears without affecting their thinking or future actions. Sadly, many believe that simply listening to Islamic teachings in this way is good enough to achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. As clearly stated in verse 285, a person must listen correctly, which in turn leads to the obedience of Allah, the Exalted. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

“…And they say, "We hear and we obey…””

This obedience involves using the blessings one has been granted correctly according to Islamic teachings. In addition, in respect to the Holy Quran, this verse makes it clear that one must hear the Holy Quran and then act on it. But acting on it is not possible when one does not understand it. Therefore, reciting or listening to the Holy Quran in a language one does not understand is not good enough to achieve peace of mind and success in both worlds. Muslims must strive to listen, recite, understand and then act on the teachings of the Holy Quran. As there is plenty of media content available in different languages which discuss the teachings of the Holy Quran, muslims are left with no excuses if they fail to understand and act on the Holy Quran and by extension, the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

“…And they say, "We hear and we obey…"”

Finally, hearing and obeying contradicts the misguided attitude of blindly following others in their choices and decisions, as the one who hears correctly will determine for themself whether or not obeying is the correct thing to do. Blind imitation is something which is highly criticized in Islamic teachings as Allah, the Exalted, expects people to study Islamic teachings with an open mind in order to determine for themself that Islam is the truth. Chapter 12 Yusuf, verse 108:

“Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allāh with insight, I and those who follow me…."”

And chapter 34 Saba, verse 46:

“Say, "I only advise you of one [thing] - that you stand for Allāh, [seeking truth] in pairs and individually, and then give thought." There is not in your companion any madness. He is only a warner to you before a severe punishment.”

Therefore, muslims must use the common sense and intellect they have been granted to determine the truthfulness of Islam for themself and therefore act on its teachings with conviction. This will ensure one remains firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times, whether times of ease or difficulty. This in turn leads to a balanced mental and physical state and ensures one correctly places everything and everyone within their life. This in turn leads to peace of mind in both worlds. Whereas, blindly following others in Islam only leads to weak faith. This person will easily misuse the blessings they have been granted whenever their desires are contradicted, such as when they are facing times of difficulty. This will prevent them from achieving peace of mind in both worlds.

Only when one actualizes their verbal declaration of faith in this way will they obtain the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

“…And they say, "We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord…"”

This makes it clear that forgiveness can only be obtained when one strives to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. Forgiveness is not obtained when one persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then expects to be forgiven. This is merely wishful thinking and has no value in Islam.

Generally speaking, sincere repentance involves feeling guilty, seeking the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, and anyone who has been wronged, as long as this will not lead to further trouble. One must sincerely promise to avoid committing the same or similar sin again and make up for any rights which have been violated in respect to Allah, the Exalted, and people.

A person must therefore ensure they adopt the correct attitude which involves sincerely obeying Allah, the Exalted, by using the blessings they have been granted correctly, as outlined in Islamic teachings, and avoid adopting wishful thinking, as everyone will be held accountable for their intentions, speech and actions in both worlds. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 285:

“…And they say, "We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination."”

Allah, the Exalted, then makes it clear that fulfilling all the duties a person has been given, using the blessings they have been granted correctly as outlined in Islamic teachings and facing every situation with patience are all within their capacity to do. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“Allāh does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…”

Therefore, people are left with no excuses if they fail to sincerely obey Allah, the Exalted. One must abandon the lazy attitude of claiming to trying their best when they are clearly not trying their best. If they were, they would undoubtedly complete all the things that are expected from them successfully. Therefore, a person must adopt the right attitude as they will be held accountable in both worlds and no excuses will be accepted from them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“…It [i.e. the soul] will have [the consequence of] what [good] it has gained, and it will bear [the consequence of] what [evil] it has earned…”

Interestingly the Arabic words used for earning good and earning bad are different. The word used for earning good indicates that collecting good deeds is easy. Whereas, the word used for earning evil indicates that earning sins is harder than earning good deeds. This is because doing good deeds in Islam requires minimal effort, time, wealth and other resources. For example, one can gain reward by speaking good or remaining silent. This has been advised in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2501. Therefore, the one who remains silent, as they have nothing good to say, will earn reward for their silence. In addition, the reward for good deeds are multiplied whereas, the consequences of sins are not, therefore, earning good deeds is easier than earning sins. This increases the chances of obtaining peace of mind and success in both worlds through performing good deeds.

Allah, the Exalted, makes things even easier for muslims by overlooking the mistakes which occur through forgetfulness or an accident. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“…Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred...”

Allah, the Exalted, then reiterates that He only tests people and gives them duties according to their ability. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“…Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear…”

This supplication also reminds muslims an important aspect of dealing with the difficulties of life with patience. One must always look at the harder difficulties of others in order to belittle their own difficulties. For example, one should always remember the difficulties faced by the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, which were much greater than the difficulties faced by the muslims that came after them. This attitude will aid one to adopt patience when facing difficulties. Patience involves avoiding complaining with one’s actions or speech and to maintain their sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, believing He only chooses what is best for them, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

In addition, this attitude will also encourage them to adopt gratitude, as the difficulty they are facing could have been much worse. Generally speaking, gratitude in one's intention involves only acting in order to please Allah, the Exalted. Gratitude in one's speech involves speaking what is good or remaining silent. And gratitude in one's actions involves using the blessings one has been granted in ways pleasing to Allah, the Exalted, as outlined in the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"…Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear…"

Muslims must support this supplication by avoiding unnecessary worldly things which can lead to stress for them in both worlds. This is one of the reasons the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, has advised in a Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4118, that simplicity is a part of faith. A person can avoid stress and difficulties by

adopting a simple lifestyle whereby they earn lawful provision according to their necessities and responsibilities while avoiding extravagance and waste. Whereas, the one who pursues unnecessary worldly things, such as more wealth, will only increase stress within their life and this attitude will encourage them to misuse the blessings they have been granted which prevents them from adopting a balanced mental and physical state and prevents them from correctly placing everything and everyone within their life. This attitude will therefore prevent them from obtaining peace of mind. Therefore, a muslim who desires to actualize this supplication and minimize the stress within their life should adopt a simple lifestyle.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"…And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy upon us…"

Pardoning is when one does not hold the wrongdoer accountable for their sin but it still affects their relationship in the future. Whereas, forgiveness is when the relationship between the two is unchanged even after the sin. This is perhaps the reason why the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, advised in Hadith found in Sunan Ibn Majah, number 4250, that the one who sincerely repents from a sin is like the one who did not commit the sin.

Islam has a simple principle, what one gives is what they shall receive. If one learns to pardon and have mercy on others, they will receive the pardon and mercy of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. This has been indicated in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 1922. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 22:

"…and let them pardon and overlook. Would you not like that Allah should forgive you?..."

But as indicated in this verse, pardoning others does not mean one should not take steps to protect themself from history repeating itself. For example, a wife being abused by her husband must take steps to protect herself and her children from him, even if it means she leaves him permenately. After she has taken these steps to protect herself and her children, then if she can pardon him for his past mistakes for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, she will receive the forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds.

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"…And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy upon us. You are our protector…"

This indicates the importance of avoiding wishful thinking. As discussed earlier, wishful thinking is when one persists on the disobedience of Allah, the Exalted, and then expects His protection, mercy and forgiveness in both worlds. This attitude has no value in Islam. Whereas, real hope in Allah, the Exalted, as indicated in verse 286, is to strive in the obedience of Allah, the Exalted, which involves using the blessings one has been granted correctly, according to Islamic teachings, sincerely repenting from any sins they might happen to commit and then expecting the protection, mercy and forgiveness of Allah, the Exalted, in both worlds. The difference between wishful thinking and hope have been discussed in a Hadith found in Jami At Tirmidhi, number 2459. The one who adopts real hope of Allah, the Exalted, will receive His aid in all aspects of their life so that they obtain peace of mind in both worlds. This is because this attitude will ensure they obtain a balanced mental and physical state and ensure they correctly place everything and everyone within their life. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

“…You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people.”

Muslims adopting real hope in Allah, the Exalted, will also ensure their superiority . Chapter 3 Alee Imran, verse 139*:*

“So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.”

If superiority does not belong to the muslim nation, it is because the condition of true belief has not been fulfilled by them. This condition will not be fulfilled by verbal claims of faith in Islam. It can only be fulfilled when one uses the blessings they have been granted according to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him. It was this attitude that gave the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, superiority. Chapter 24 An Nur, verse 55:

"Allāh has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient."

Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 286:

"…You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people."

In addition, it is important to note that the aid and victory of Allah, the Exalted, is not according to the desires and wishes of people. It is always according to the infinite knowledge and wisdom of Allah, the Exalted, and occurs when

it is best for people and in a way which is best for people, even if this is not obvious to them. Chapter 2 Al Baqarah, verse 216:

"…But perhaps you hate a thing and it is good for you; and perhaps you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, while you know not."

Therefore, muslims must remain firm on the sincere obedience of Allah, the Exalted, at all times, while being confident He will grant them peace of mind and victory in both worlds, even if this is not obvious to them.

All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds and may peace and blessings be upon His final Messenger, Muhammad, his noble Family and Companions.

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